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COLUMBIA JOURNALISM REVIEW

Can CBS News Come Back?

by Neil Hickey

Chasing the Drug Money

by Joel Simon

Couples on the Foreign Beat

by Robin Blumenthal

Low Ethics in High Tech

by Trudy Lieberman

Rebirth of the Long Story

by Steve Weinberg

Is Hersh Right About JFK?

by Jules Witcover

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1998

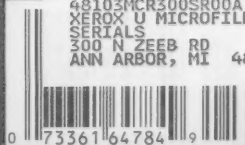
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Stories by
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OUR STORY ON UNION PACIFIC DESCRIBED A RAILROAD RUNNING ON TROUBLED TRACKS.

It started with a catastrophic head-on collision outside Devine, Texas. When *San Antonio Express-News* reporter Russell Gold started digging into Federal Railroad Administration and Union Pacific records for more information, he found shocking evidence of a system gone dangerously awry. The day after "Danger On The Rails" broke, the FRA announced a major investigation of Union Pacific. Days later, another train derailed on South Texas tracks, this time with no loss of life. After our series, the company pledged to spend \$15.5 million on safety measures and to add 1,000 employees to its payroll. Perhaps our coverage will help reduce future accidents. One more way Hearst Newspapers enrich their readers' lives every day.



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FOSTER/JOHN SAMORA
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Don't confuse a weedeater with Weed Eater.®

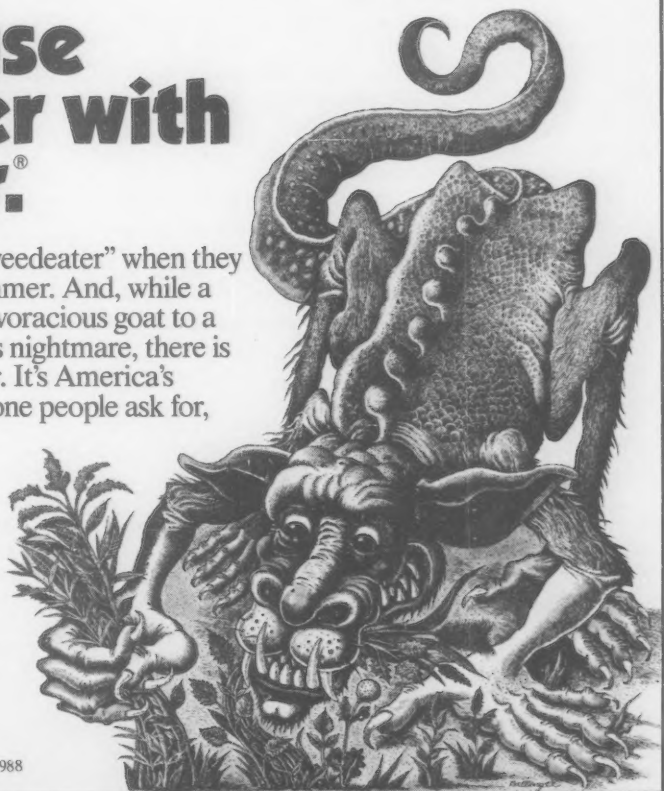
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Publisher's Note

by Joan Konner

Why We Love/Hate *The New New York Times*

It's because we love it so much that there is so much talk these days about The new New York Times. How are we — primarily people in journalistic circles — reacting to the changes? The following are the findings from my personal survey taken mostly in and around New York:

■ About color on the editorial pages:

In the anti column:

"It looks like a comic book." (Television network business manager)

"It trivializes the news." (Former *Times* editor)

"Now your eye goes directly to the pictures instead of the headlines. It instantly takes you away from the substance of the news." (Magazine editor)

"It changes the way I read the paper. The headline used to tell me what was the most important story. Now the picture leads the news." (Newspaper editor)

"Did you see that four-column photo on the Girls Choir of Harlem? That's the front page news? It's *not* front page news. The color and the pictures are driving the definition of news. And all that space!" (News guru)

"I love the color, except on the front page because it distorts what's news." (Publishing executive)

"Too much space is being given to the pictures." (Graphic designer)

"It's just a promotion and packaging gimmick. It doesn't improve the reporting." (News curmudgeon)

"The color reproduction itself is a mess. Half the pictures seem to be double exposure." (Newspaper executive)

"I can't stand it, I can't stand it. The color cheapens everything. Besides, the different inks overlap and blur." (Spouse of a magazine editor)

On the positive side:

"I love it. It doesn't change anything. It just makes the whole thing look better." (Media critic)

"The color reproduction is the best I've seen in a newspaper. It's really stunning." (Newspaper executive)

■ And then there's this:

"Who cares about the color? The point is that the *Times* is so PC, it never reports anything accurately or honestly anymore." (Columnist)

■ About color in advertising, there was either a passive acceptance or active embrace:

"The ads look great." (Publisher)

"If it helps advertising, might as well have it." (Editor)

"That's where color belongs, if you have to have it. That's where you are supposed to be selling, not in the news columns." (Intelligent reader)

■ An analysis of the findings, by group, indicates that there is

clearly an age gap. Younger people and today's media leaders accept, even embrace, the migration of color into the old order of black and white, with a few exceptions. Older people, that is, formerly and media priests, generally reject the change on substantive grounds — editorial substance, that is, not business substance.

■ About the addition of new sections, while almost entirely negative, the comments ranged from sneer to despair:

"If they have an arts section every day and call it Arts, why do they name their daily sports section, SportsMonday, SportsTuesday, SportsWednesday? Why not just Sports, like Arts? It doesn't make sense." (Editor)

"Some sections are so thin, you think it's a flyer." (Businessman)

"What's the point? I suppose the extra sections are to attract advertising, but there's almost no advertising in some of those sections." (Media executive)

"Technology rules, not thought anymore." (Academic)

"You can't allow advertising to determine everything." (Advertising executive)

"I hate it." (Businessman)

"I hate it." (Lawyer)

"I hate it." (Regular readers, over and over)

"I can't find anything anymore." (All of the above)

In the opposite column:

"Wake up and grow up! Almost every newspaper has full color and many sections. The *Times* was late to the party and is just now catching up. Soon the readers will wonder how they ever lived without color." (Magazine editor)

■ Maybe I need to widen my social circles. Not maybe. I do. The sample is small. (I haven't been going out all that much, and the crowd skews older.) But as we say to our children, the only reason we are criticizing you is because we love you so much. We want you to grow up to be the best you can be.

People are talking about *their New York Times* — and not just in and around New York — because it means so much to them. *The New York Times* is, for so many of us, our perpetual dinner party, our shared cultural blankie, our validated passport to an outside world. *The New York Times* means the world to us, even when the world is our beat. We even believe the *Times* belongs to us, that a great newspaper on our doorstep every day is our right, which, of course, it isn't.

Unfortunately, whether criticism or positive reinforcement is the better strategy in raising the child one never knows until it is too late. ♦

Letters

PHOTO EXPOSÉ

Sig Gissler's article "What Happens When Gannett Takes Over" (CJR, November/December) was fascinating. But there's more to the David Peterson episode at Gannett's *Des Moines Register*. According to an article by Jon Bowermaster in the January 1988 issue of *American Photographer*, Peterson, a six-time Iowa Press Photographer of the Year, couldn't get his paper, the *Register*, to agree to a photo exposé on the plight of area farmers. So he applied for a \$10,000 grant from the Nikon company and the National Press Photographers Association.

With the money, Peterson took a three-month leave. If the *Register* had refused his pictures, Peterson could have sold them elsewhere.

Bowermaster also reported that the paper tried (without success) to get Peterson to water down his essay with more positive shots. The *Register* not only finally ran the pictures, but even nominated them for the Pulitzer Prize.

Now here's the kicker: according to *American Photographer*, the *Des Moines Register* never acknowledged to its readers or the Pulitzer committee that Peterson produced the pictures on his own time and under grant. No mention of Nikon or NPPA was ever made in the *Register's* pages.

Even worse, according to the article, managing editor Arnie Garson wrote a story for the *Register* on "how we did it." Still no mention of the grant, Nikon, or NPPA.

I'll bet your readers would like to know if Peterson stayed on with Gannett.

STEVE LAPRADE
Norman, Oklahoma

Editor's note: *He did.*

Applause for Sig Gissler's well-balanced analysis of corporate transformations in formerly family-owned major newspapers. But there is an additional area that deserves review: major chains gobbling up small-town and suburban weeklies.

Until the 1980s, Jackson, Mississippi, was a two-daily town, but both were taken over by Gannett and later combined. One weekly north of the city (our major com-



petitor) and the one west of Jackson (founded by my great-grandparents) came under Gannett control. They soon lost their local, small-town flavor.

To compete, the independent weeklies were forced to specialize. There are now two primarily-black weeklies in Jackson; one metro business weekly; one focusing on white,

affluent areas of the city; two in the eastern suburbs, with a return to small-town news; and my employer, competing with a Gannett weekly and running long articles.

Although many weeklies across the state have either been taken over as corporate satellites or run out of business by these companies' aggressive tactics, a niche has opened for a select few independent publications to thrive as alternatives to coverage dictated by profit.

DUANE GORDON
Staff reporter

The Madison County Journal
Ridgeland, Mississippi

WHO'S ON FIRST

With regard to Floyd Abrams's piece, "Look Who's Trashing the First Amendment" (CJR, November/December): I don't think the current concerns of the left are in opposition to the First Amendment, but rather in favor of the expanded understanding of the First Amendment in the twentieth century to favor free and diverse expression and not merely protect expression from state suppression. To extend Liebling's epigram about freedom of the press, anyone can speak effectively to the republic if he or she can buy time or space in the media. And he or she can drown out other voices not by the force of their argument, the alleged yardstick of the marketplace of ideas, but by the size of their megaphone. A good example of this megaphone monopoly was illustrated in CJR's excellent piece about the deafening media silence that accompanied the greatest giveaway of taxpayers's assets in history — the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

It was unfortunate that *The Nation* framed its useful forum in terms of the wrong guys on the side of the First



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Amendment. It is counterproductive to frame the question as to which "side" is most favored or suppressed. The entire public is deprived of the lively and full debate democracy demands when, effectively, only money talks.

JOHN M. PHELAN
Professor and director emeritus
McGannon Communications Research
Fordham University
New York, New York

CORPORATE CONTROL

Our company Internews is a nonprofit that works extensively with local and independent broadcast media in Russia and other regions of the former Soviet Union. You published a brief article describing our work in your May/June 1996 issue.

Now I discover ("CJR World," November/December) that in Russia, "a budding independent press returns to the old ways." My goodness, I think, have the commies gained control of the media while I slept? Perhaps Yeltsin's government or the Russian parliament have taken over?

But no, it is a giant oil company that has bought into the newspaper *Izvestia*. Scandalous! Imagine if we let big companies like General Electric own media!

And, we are told, Vladimir Guzensky, owner of "media conglomerate, banking, and real estate interests" was allowed to transmit NTV, which he owns with another energy group and a bank, nationally; and he got a cable TV venture as well. Shameful! Good thing this is the good old USA or we'd have NBC on both broadcast and cable, with Bill Gates investing in them!

After Russian media "produced hard-hitting coverage of news" for a few years, now "tough coverage is a rarity." Sound familiar?

Finally, the article lays blame as follows: "Russia's editors themselves, through arrogance and bad business decisions, have pushed their media into the orbits of corporations." I see. Is that how it happened here, too?

EVELYN MESSINGER
Executive director
Internews
San Rafael, California

MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES

I write to correct an inaccuracy in a "Darts & Laurels" item in your November/December 1997 issue. At no time did Tracy Everbach of *The Dallas Morning*

News ever write a "glowing testimonial" to appear in my law firm's "glossy brochure." I'm afraid Tracy is the victim of my error. I bear the responsibility and blame.

Tracy is a hard-working, ethical reporter. I also consider her my friend. When my partners and I established our law firm, we hired a public relations firm to produce a brochure. In order to gain more information about our fledgling firm, the p.r. specialist asked me for the names of friends, colleagues, and associates. Unfortunately for Tracy, I gave the woman her name.

Tracy was contacted and asked to describe her impressions of my work and me. She was not informed and did not know that her comments would be transcribed and published in our brochure. It's not that I tried to hide that fact. I simply was ignorant regarding the culture of journalists. As Tracy has been swift to inform me, my error placed her in a very difficult position with her editors and her peers. If you knew her and her work, you would find her worthy of laurels. Reserve the darts for me.

THOMAS M. MELSHEIMER
Lynn Stodghill Melsheimer & Tillotson
Dallas, Texas

YOU CAN FIGHT ABUSE

It isn't true that newspapers have no recourse if a government agency pulls out public notice advertising in revenge for something the paper has published ("Puerto Rico: Publishing News, Losing Ads," *CJR*, September/October). In fact, they can sue, and they can win.

Nearly a decade ago we sued the sheriff of Broward County, Florida, for doing precisely what the governor of Puerto Rico apparently did to *El Nuevo Día*. Sheriff Nick Navarro had halted a twenty-year practice of publishing sheriff's sales and forfeiture notices in our Fort Lauderdale paper because he was angry about something we had written about him.

Our lead counsel, Floyd Abrams of New York's Cahill Gordon & Reindel, argued that it's illegal for a government agency to withdraw a benefit, even a wholly discretionary one like advertising, as punishment for exercising a constitutionally protected right. Indeed, the case law Abrams based his arguments on is very favorable to the press, and even holds that timing alone may be sufficient to prove motive: if the unfavorable story runs and, a day later, the ads are pulled, a retribution motive can be inferred.

We won at trial, we were upheld on



Trademark Checklist

This annual Trademark Checklist is a handy guide to some of the best known federally registered U.S. trademarks. Compiled by the International Trademark Association (INTA), the Trademark Checklist lists more than 4,000 trademarks and service marks with their generic terms.



Ace elastic bandages
Alka-Seltzer antacid analgesic tablets
America Online on-line computer services
Ant Farm ant vivarium
Apple computers
Bac-Os imitation bacon bits
Baggies plastic bags
Band-Aid adhesive bandages
Barbie dolls
Ben & Jerry's ice cream
Big Mac hamburger sandwiches
Birkenstock shoes, sandals
Boogie surfboards
Breathalyzer alcoholic content measuring apparatus
Brillo soaps, scouring pads
Bruegger's bagels
Campbell's soup
Candy Land board game
Cat Chow pet food by Purina
Chap Stick lip balm
Cheez Doodles cheese-flavored corn puffs
Cherry Garcia ice cream flavor
Chia Pet planters
Chiquita fresh fruit, fruit juices
Chunky Monkey ice cream flavor
Citibank banking services
Cliffs Notes study guides
Clorox bleaching detergents, cleaners
Colorization film conversion services
Cool Ranch flavoring for corn chips
Cool Whip dessert topping

Courvoisier cognac
Day-Glo daylight fluorescent colors
DHL courier services
Dictaphone voice processing products
Discman portable disc players
Dixie paper cups
Dr. Martens shoes and boots
Dr Pepper soft drinks
Drivers Wanted auto sales promotion, warranties
Dumpster trash containers, bins
Dustbuster portable vacuums
Elmer's adhesives
Evian bottled water
Express Mail overnight and international delivery services
Fantastik spray cleaner
FedEx overnight and international delivery services
Fiberglas yarns, fibers, insulation
Filofax diaries, agenda books
Formica plastic laminated sheets of wood, fabrics or paper
Frigidaire appliances
Frisbee flying discs
Froot Loops cereal
Fudgsicle fudge pops
Gap clothing
Gatorade thirst quencher
Ginsu knives
Gore-Tex water-repellent fabric, outerwear
Got Milk? Milk Assoc. slogan
Gummi Bears cartoon characters
Hacky Sack foot game with bag
Happy Meal dinners

Harley-Davidson motorcycles
Healthy Request soup
Heimlich Maneuver anti-choking educational services
Hershey's Kisses chocolates
Hey, You Never Know lottery service slogan
Hi-Liter highlighting markers
Hula-Hoop plastic hoops
Hummer trucks
IKEA furniture
IMAX motion picture projectors,
Intel Inside microprocessors
J. Crew clothing, stores
Jack Daniel's Tennessee whiskey
Jägermeister liqueurs
Jaws of Life rescue tools
Java software
JCPenney department stores
Jeep all-terrain vehicles
Jell-O gelatin, pudding
Jet Ski personal watercraft
Jiffy mail bags
Jockey underwear
JumboTron large tv screens
Junior mints
Kitty Litter cat box filler
Kleenex tissues, disposable diapers
Kmart department stores
Ko-Rec-Type correction fluid
Krazy Glue adhesives
Lava lamps
La-Z-Boy recliners
Lay's potato chips
Levi's jeans, sportswear
Lucite acrylic resin, paints
Lycra spandex fibers
Lysol disinfectant

The Trademark Checklist is a quick reference guide to assist authors, writers, journalists, editors, proofreaders and fact checkers with proper trademark usage.

Here are a few important usage guidelines that will help prevent letters of complaint from trademark owners:

- Trademarks are proper adjectives and should be capitalized and followed by a generic noun or phrase
- Trademarks should not be pluralized or used in the possessive form
- Trademarks are never verbs

Mac computers
 Mace tear gas
 Magic 8 Ball toy fortune telling apparatus
 Magic Marker felt-tipped pens
 Marlboro Lights cigarettes
 Mary Jane shoes, boots
 MasterCard credit services
 McDonald's restaurant services
 Microsoft computer software
 Mister Softee trucks and ice cream
 M&M's candy
 MTV broadcasting services
 Mylar polyester film
 Naugahyde plastic coated fabrics
 Nestlé chocolate
 Netscape software for networking
 Netscape Navigator software
 No-Doz drowsiness relief tablets
 Nordic Track cross-country exerciser
 Novell computer and programing
 Novocain local anesthetic
 NutraSweet sweetener
 NyQuil cold medicine
 Olean edible fat substitute
 OFF! insect repellent
 Oreo cookies
 Oscar motion picture awards
 Ouija talking board sets
 Parchesi board game
 Pentium computer, hardware, microprocessor
 Pepto-Bismol upset stomach remedy
 Photostat copiers
 Ping-Pong tennis table equipment
 Pixy Stix fruit-flavored powder candy in straws
 Play-Doh modeling compound
 Plexiglas acrylic plastic
 Polarfleece textile fabrics
 Polartec textile fabrics
 Polaroid cameras, film
 Popsicle flavored ices
 Porta Potti portable toilets
 Post-it note pads, self-stick notes
 PowerBook electronic organizers
 PowerBar nutritional snack bar
 PowerPoint computer programs
 Prozac antidepressant

Q-Tips cotton swabs
 Qiana polyester fiber
 Quiksilver apparel
 Ray-Ban sunglasses
 Reddi Wip whipped topping
 Revo sunglasses
 Roloids antacid tablets
 Rollerblade in-line skates
 Rolodex rotary card files
 Rugrats tv series
 Sanforized preshrunk fabric
 Sanka decaffeinated coffee
 Scotch transparent tape
 Scotchguard fabric protector
 ScotTowels paper towels
 Seeing Eye dog guides
 Shake 'n Bake coating mixes
 Sheetrock plaster wall board
 Sig Sauer pistols, firearms
 Ski-Doo snowmobiles
 Slim-Fast dietary meal replacement
 SmartLease vehicle leasing services
 Smirnoff vodka
 Snapple bottled fruit drinks, teas
 Softsoap liquid soap
 StairMaster exercise equipment
 Starbucks coffee
 Styrofoam plastic foam
 Suburban truck
 Swiss Army knives
 Swiss Miss puddings, cocoa
 Tabasco pepper sauce
 Tamagotchi computer entertainment systems
 Technicolor motion picture processing services
 Teflon fluorocarbon resins, non-stick coatings
 Teva sandals
 The Real World tv series
 Thinsulate thermal insulation
 Timberland boots, outerwear
 Toblerone chocolate
 Toll-House chocolate morsels
 Top-Sider deck shoes by Sperry
 Triscuit crackers
 U-Haul truck rental services
 Ultrasuede fabric
 UNIX computer and programing
 Victoria's Secret clothing, intimate apparel

Velcro hoop and loop fasteners
 Versa Climber exercise equipment
 Versace mens and womens apparel, stores
 Vise-Grip tools, clamps
 Wal-Mart retail stores
 Walkman portable stereos by Sony
 Wave Runner personal watercraft, water scooters
 Weed Eater lawn trimmers
 Weedwacker lawn trimmers
 Weight Watchers food products, weight reduction centers
 Wiffle plastic balls and bats
 Windbreaker clothing, jackets
 Windex glass cleaner
 Windows operating system
 Windsurfer sailboards
 Winnebago motor homes
 Wite-Out correction fluid
 Wonderbra brassieres
 WordPerfect software
 World Series championship baseball games
 X-Acto knives
 Xerox photocopiers, copies, computer systems
 York peppermint patties
 Ziploc resealable bags
 Zippo cigarette lighters

NUMERICAL:

17-Mile Drive clothing, scenic drive
 20 Mule Team borax
 3 Musketeers candy bars
 3-In-One household and motor oil
 3Com computer networking products
 3M carpet protector
 409 glass and all-purpose cleaner
 501 jeans by Levi Strauss & Co.
 7-Eleven convenience stores
 76 auto products and services
 707 aircraft/aircraft models and toys
 727 aircraft/aircraft models and toys
 747 aircraft/aircraft models and toys
 7UP soft drinks
 V8 vegetable juice
 9-Lives cat food

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 (212) 854-3958

appeal, and we were upheld on fees. We got some \$30,000 in damages and around \$250,000 in costs. The voters dumped Navarro in the next Republican primary.

No need for newspeople to take this kind of abuse from political hacks.

EDWARD WASSERMAN
Chairman and editor in chief
Daily Business Reviews
Miami, Florida

THE BLOOMBERG BOX

Interesting piece on Bloomberg ("How Bloomberg Pressures Editors," *CJR*, September/October). I just want to add, lest anyone think the company's ambitions are limited to the U.S., that Britain has a Bloomberg satellite channel (it looks like a computer screen with the little boxes of graphics, figures, and headlines all over the place with a guy talking in the middle), and the company also supplies the business section for *The Independent* on Sunday. The *UK Press Gazette* reported a few months ago that despite promises to the contrary, buying in from Bloomberg has meant letting go some of *The Independent's* existing business editorial staff.

WENDY M. GROSSMAN
Richmond, Surrey, England

One recent weekend my mother-in-law, who lives in Cedar Grove, New Jersey, received a free unsolicited battery-powered AM radio in the mail. The gimmick was that the radio receives only one station: WBBR 1130 AM, Bloomberg Radio News.

Perhaps editors who cherish the Bloomberg terminals described in your recent story would do well to treat the Bloomberg radios as an object lesson about the news service's ultimate objective.

PETER R. WILEY
Lewisburg, Pennsylvania

TEAMSTER TEMPEST

Your report on the coverage of the Teamsters eighteen months ago ("Working the Teamsters," *CJR*, July/August 1996) certainly deserves a Dart. In that piece, Mike Hoyt unfairly attacked the few reporters who were skeptical of union "reformer" Ron Carey. Hoyt referred to our coverage as a "sideshow" that generated "inconclusive smoke" and that had an "Alice in Wonderland quality."

My, what a difference a year makes. Carey's exit from the union presidency,

after a finding that he was involved in a corrupt election, is now making headlines. But none of this is a surprise to the few reporters who took the time to thoroughly investigate the union boss and his past behavior. Our instincts and the facts persuaded us long ago that we had a skunk by the tail. Now the odor is official.

There were numerous problems with Hoyt's broadside. For one thing, he trusted the wrong people: Carey's henchmen, the traditional labor press, even the union's federal overseers who protected Carey for years. All of these sources had a vested interest in silencing or ignoring criticism while the most important labor scandal of the decade was unfolding.

The worst aspect of his story was its chilling effect. He undoubtedly scared away other reporters from covering labor in an aggressive way. We now find that the key leaders of the so-called labor reform movement (including Carey and several AFL-CIO bigwigs) are likely to face criminal charges. But that news will come as a shock to most citizens — thanks to a labor press that used Hoyt's story as an excuse to remain asleep in their own wonderland.

RICHARD BEHAR
Senior writer, *Fortune*
EDWARD BARNES
Correspondent, *Time*
New York, New York

Mike Hoyt replies: *My story on coverage of the 1996 Teamsters election campaign (which is available on CJR's Web site) made several points. One was that coverage of a series of corruption charges against Carey crowded out coverage of nuts-and-bolts issues — about both candidates' records as negotiators, about who was supporting them, about their platforms and ideas, about how they financed their campaigns, etc. — that would have helped a million and a half teamsters cast informed votes. The point remains valid.*

My piece noted that longtime labor reporters tended to discount the many corruption accusations that were floated about Carey during the campaign, and I raised a still-open question about their attitude: "Is this a kind of bias, or is it a reflection of experience and knowledge? A bit of both?" I did indeed criticize the pieces that Behar and Barnes wrote in Time suggesting that Carey was a) tight with the Mafia and b) took payoffs — claims that blew away like smoke after official investigation. I would still criticize them. Carey apparently fought dirty in the campaign. Does that validate the

Mafia and payoff stories? No. If Bill Clinton is found to have evaded campaign law, does that mean the people who reported that he killed Vincent Foster are correct?

I hoped to encourage reporting on the Teamsters, not chill it.

ADMITTING TO ALCOHOLISM

Lance Morrow suggests in his piece "Journalism After Diana" (*CJR*, November/December) that it may have been press inattention to Wilbur Mills's alcoholism that caused it to be unreported until he and Fanne Fox — the "Argentine Firecracker" — splashed into both Washington's Tidal Basin and the headlines in 1974. Morrow is only partly correct.

Because the House Ways and Means Committee, which the Arkansas Democrat chaired, dealt with the funding of health programs, I often covered its hearings when I was the chief medical and science reporter at the now-defunct *Washington Star*.

One day in 1972 or, perhaps even earlier, a hearing had just ended when Mills called me aside and said he had something important to tell me. That something was that he was a chronic alcoholic and that I should understand that he would like that known.

I duly reported that to my editors, but they wouldn't print it. I thought then and still do that — besides being a disservice to the public — this was a disservice to Mills.

JUDITH RANDAL
Independent science journalist
Lovettsville, Virginia

CJR

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CJR upfront

MAGAZINES

OUT OF *MONEY*

Nothing quite like it had ever happened before in the hallowed house that Luce built — Time Inc., home of *Time*, *Life*, *Fortune*, *People*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Entertainment Weekly* and a score of others, including *Money* magazine. On November 24, the Monday before Thanksgiving, virtually the entire top editorial echelon of *Money* — one of America's most successful and highly profitable monthlies — was called in, one by one, and fired. No warning. No visible reason for so drastic and shocking a move. Among the casualties:

- Caroline Donnelly, 52, executive editor, a *Money* staffer since the title's birth in 1972. She had just returned from a special assignment in Hong Kong, producing her third trial issue of a *Money* insert in the Southeast Asian edition of *Time*.

- Richard Eisenberg, 41, executive editor, a nineteen-year veteran, widely regarded as a rising star and potential candidate to lead the magazine eventually.

- Frank Merrick, 55, assistant managing editor and top editor of the magazine's profitable newsletter, *Retire With Money*.

- Rudy Hoglund, 55, art director; former art director of *Time* and a twenty-year veteran of the company.

- Junius Ellis, 47, writer of the investment advice column "Buy Sell Hold," who joined *Money* in 1984.

- Ann Reilly Dowd, Washington bureau chief; the bureau was shuttered and one other, junior employee was dismissed.

The purge had its roots in a November 3 memo to the Time Inc. staff from editor-in-chief Norman Pearlstine, 55, announc-

ing that *Money*'s highly respected managing editor of eight years, Frank Lalli, 55, was moving up to the new post of senior executive editor of Time Inc. to "under-



Frank Lalli

take a number of special projects," including creating foreign editions of *Money* and other magazines. The memo acknowledged that Lalli had enhanced *Money*'s position as the nation's "largest and most influential" journal of personal finance — its profits were on course for a record \$42 million in 1997, and ad revenue was up 18 percent to \$88 million for the first nine months of the year. Last February, *Advertising Age* named Lalli Editor of the Year (along with *Fortune* managing editor John Huey, 49).

Replacing Lalli, Pearlstine said,

AT TIME INC., MASS FIRINGS JUST WEREN'T THE STYLE.

would be 33-year-old Robert Safian, a senior editor at *Fortune* who'd been at the company only nine months. Safian had been executive editor of Steve Brill's *American Lawyer* at 26, and put in three years at *Money* competitor *SmartMoney*.

Along with that startling news, Pearlstine said that *Money* would become part of a new structure called the Business Information Group that would include

Fortune and *Your Company*, a bi-monthly magazine for people who run small businesses. And Safian would

report not to Pearlstine but to *Fortune*'s John Huey, and to Richard Kirkland, 46, Huey's deputy managing editor. Huey thus becomes the only editor in the far-flung Time Inc. empire to have two major magazines in his control.

When Huey told the victims that they were being dismissed, employees throughout the company were surprised, dazed, and bewildered. Mass firings in good times just weren't the style at paternalistic Time Inc., an industry pacesetter that has long cherished a reputation for treating its people extremely well — "Paradise Publishing," the trade press had dubbed it. A shiver of apprehension tinged with gloom permeated Time Inc.'s Rockefeller Center headquar-

ters, according to staffers interviewed by CJR. High editors at some other Time Inc. magazines wondered: Is this the reward for years of loyalty — and for making your numbers?

One thing seemed clear: Pearlstine wants a new, revamped *Money* — almost surely to include a major redesign. *Money* has long been a huge success, but news-



Norman Pearlstine

TIMOTHY GREEN/ELD/SANDERS



John Huey



Robert Safian

stand sales slid 15.5 percent in the first six months of 1997, largely due to a price hike from \$3.50 to \$3.95. Total circulation was down 6.7 percent in the same period to 1.94 million even as ad income rose. Competition was growing stiffer from *SmartMoney*, *Worth*, and the new *Bloomberg Personal Finance* magazine.

When he was executive editor of *The Wall Street Journal*, Pearlstine was the major force in creating *SmartMoney* (which is co-owned by Dow Jones and Hearst). Now the buzz is that the *Money* Pearlstine yearns for would be more surprising, sophisticated, and edgy to attract new, younger readers. Already Safian has hired four veterans of *SmartMoney* and *The American Lawyer* for important positions at *Money*.

Pearlstine is under tremendous pressure from parent Time Warner to raise the magazine group's already rich profits. Combining some of the editorial operations of *Money* and *Fortune* is one tactic he is employing to reduce costs. The business sides at both magazines are controlled by group publisher Michael Pepe. The plan is that some writers and editors will contribute to both titles, and that the two copy desks may be merged.

Lalli, says an insider, was not great fan of such consolidation, which may have hastened his departure. He also resisted boosting *Money's* cover price to \$3.95. But an eight-year term as top editor of any Time Inc. magazine is considered a long run. One Lalli associate says: "If you gave Frank some truth serum, he'd probably admit that, at this stage of his career, he was entering Central Park and heading for the finish line of this particular Marathon."

Pearlstine, Huey, and Safian would not respond to *CJR's* queries about the expected alterations in *Money's* format, content, and procedures. It's simply "premature" to talk about it, Safian said. But Time Inc. folk — editors, writers, production people — wonder if *Money's* experience presages a new style of running the company's legendary armada of magazines. What consolidations might take place at what publications? For what strategic purpose? How many jobs might be lost?

And most of all: How does the company calm the jitters of hundreds of employees who fear that unheralded mass firings are a brand new operating technique and productivity tool in what once was the comfy-cozy and secure atmosphere of Time Inc.? —Neil Hickey
Hickey is *CJR's* editor at large.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

AN ACT THAT ISN'T WORKING

After three decades, an annual cost to taxpayers of more than \$80 million, and three attempts by Congress to improve it, the Freedom Of Information Act remains a wonderful ideal, but in practice it isn't all that useful to journalists. In fact, the FOIA is cumbersome, inefficient, and often unproductive, and the press has largely abandoned it.

The FOIA requires federal agencies to give copies of records to the public, including the press, when they're requested, unless the information sought falls within one of the act's nine exemptions. When passed in 1966, Congress and the press expected it to enable journalists to pry records from federal bureaucracies within ten to twenty working days. But it hasn't turned out to be that efficient. When it comes to the FOIA, an American Society of Newspaper Editors news release advised in July: Avoid it. "A requester would do better to talk to an agency's public affairs office," ASNE said, and get the records without filing a formal request.

"It serves journalists less well than it has in the past, partly because of the delays," says Rebecca Daugherty of the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press. "But where I think the FOIA act has derailed is over the interpretation of the privacy exemption." The act exempts from release personnel, medical, law enforcement, and other files that contain private information about individuals.

In 1989, though, the U.S. Supreme Court considered a suit brought by the Reporters Committee. In the suit, a CBS reporter claimed the FBI illegally refused to release the arrest record of a Defense Department contractor whom CBS suspected of having ties to organized crime. The court, in a landmark ruling, agreed with the FBI, and said agencies can withhold records about individuals unless they shed light on how the agency is run. Unfortunately, Daugherty says, agencies broadly interpret that ruling to keep secret any records that mention private citizens. "If you can't find out any information about people who are affected by

regulation or who are fined by the government or who are running the government or consulting with the government or who are jailed by the government," she argues, "then you don't really have any idea what the government is doing."

It's not unusual to have requests turned down under one of the act's exemptions, and if a reporter has waited three months to three years to get the response, being told "no" can be especially irritating. "Journalists tend to use the act rather infrequently," says Harry Hammitt, publisher of *Access Reports*, a biweekly FOIA newsletter published in Lynchburg, Virginia, "largely because the act doesn't work very efficiently for journalists."

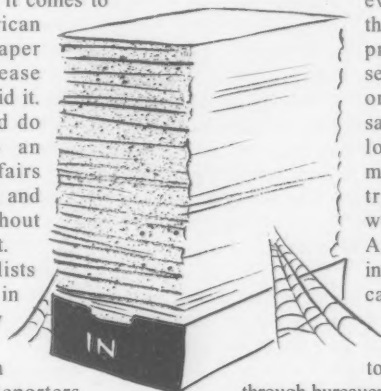
Hammitt estimates that journalists file only about 5 percent of the estimated 600,000 requests federal agencies receive

every year. By far, the biggest users are private businesses seeking information on competitors or sales leads, lawyers looking for documents, and prisoners trying to discover who ratted on them. Among journalists, investigative reporters can best use FOIA, because they usually have the time to shepherd requests

through bureaucracies. But even they tend to be reluctant FOIA users.

It's hard to generalize about agency responses, according to Michael Ravnitzky, a law student and self-trained FOIA expert in St. Paul, Minnesota, who has filed 2,000 requests of his own and often advises reporters on how to make FOIA work for them. Smaller agencies, such as the Comptroller of the Currency, and even larger agencies like the Department of Health and Human Services, provide records efficiently within a few weeks, he says. Others have delays of several years, including the Department of Justice, which has about 750 employees processing approximately 135,000 annual FOIA and Privacy Act requests; the State Department; the Internal Revenue Service; and the Central Intelligence Agency.

Under 1996 amendments to the act, the FOIA gives agencies twenty days to respond to a request. If a reporter gets a response that soon, though, it's usually a



letter saying the request is being processed. More typical are requests that are filled in months, if not years, after the story for which they were needed was published. "I battled the Department of Energy for five years for documents relating to the clean-up of the Three Mile Island nuclear reactor," recalls David DeKok of the Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, *Patriot-News*. "You can't depend on the FOIA at all for stories with deadlines less than two months out." Agencies that have long delays typically get a lot of requests, many of them complicated, and their records are sensitive.

T rue enough, agency responses have improved during the past five years, Ravnitzky says. Moreover, the 1996 FOIA amendments, known as the Electronic Freedom of Information Act, require agencies to speed up responses if there is an "urgency to inform the public," and to release records in electronic form, including putting some records online and providing records on CD or computer disk, if asked.

There are several strategies to get quicker and fuller agency responses:

- Before filing requests, talk with FOIA officers in the relevant agency to get advice. If they ask for clarification, provide a quick response. Ravnitzky points out that the IRS denies about 85 percent of all requests because requesters didn't respond to an inquiry asking for additional information or clarification.

- Make your request specific, if possible. Asking for everything an agency has on a subject will increase the response time.

- Ask for expedited responses. But you have to make good arguments, Ravnitzky says. Explain specifically why the information is important to the public and why it needs to be disseminated quickly.

- Anticipate an agency's denial and argue up front against the exemptions likely to be invoked. Records dealing with private citizens are subject to the privacy exemption; and records of ongoing criminal investigations, pertaining to national security, or containing a company's proprietary information also are covered by exemptions. Arguing that releasing the records is in the public interest might avoid time-consuming appeals.

- Always appeal rejections. A lawyer isn't necessary, but a well-argued defense is.

—James Aucoin

Aucoin is an assistant professor of communications at the University of South Alabama in Mobile.

NEWSPAPERS

GANNETT'S SELLOUT IN PARADISE

Gannett may have several million reasons to sell the Virgin Islands *Daily News* to Jeffrey L. Prosser, but do they add up? Prosser, a forty-one-year-old financier, has cut a wide and controversial swath through the islands, becoming in the process one of the principal targets of the *Daily News*, a small but stellar daily. The big chain is handing the leash of a fine watchdog over to a man at whom the dog was barking.

The *Daily News* is the dominant voice in the U.S. Virgin Islands, and even its critics there — like Tito Morales, president of the territory's Central Labor Council — consider it an irreplaceable source of essential news. "There's a lot of things they do that aren't positive for the community," Morales says, but "there's things they say that need to be said." Professional colleagues tend to agree with the latter. The St. Thomas-based paper has been honored with a startling list of prizes, including a public service Pulitzer (in 1995), a Selden Ring, several Investigative Reporters & Editors and Sigma Delta Chi Awards — and thirteen "Best of Gannett" awards just since 1991.

Along the way, in a territory with a total population of about 109,000, the

sists of about 8 million minutes per month of "audiotext" traffic, through its Guyanan subsidiary, GT&T. This is 900-number telephone traffic, on which callers pay for entertainment or information. While Prosser's spokesman, Ed Crouch, says the traffic includes services about such subjects as "psychics and sports cars," he concedes that "a substantial percentage" of it comes from sex calls.



Jeffrey Prosser, right, who makes much of his money from a phone-sex business, met in September with employees of the Virgin Islands *Daily News*, the prize-winning newspaper that has been his longtime critic, and that he is now buying from the Gannett chain.

Prosser is expected to shed that part of the business when a complicated split with his partner, Cornelius B. Prior, is completed. But nonetheless: apple-cheeked Gannett is selling its prize-winning newspaper to a world-class phone-sex operator.

Prosser's relationship with local government is part of the controversy. He has also been a prominent supporter — and beneficiary — of Roy L. Schneider, the embattled governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands, who faces growing criticism in the territory for what some perceive as fiscal mismanagement, who despite his problems is expected to run for reelection this year, and who has had a long-running feud with the *Daily News*. The Schneider/Prosser relationship is out front: "The governor has said he was a friend of Jeffrey Prosser's before the sale [of the *Daily News*], during the sale, and he will be a friend after the sale," says Schneider's spokesman, Hal Hatfield.

Before he was elected in 1995, Schneider, a 58-year-old oncologist, served on the board of another ANK sub-

REPORTERS FEAR THAT THEIR PAPER'S NEW OWNER HAS A NUMBER OF REASONS TO DEFANG THEM.

News's circulation has risen from 6,000 in 1979 — when Gannett bought it for \$3.5 million — to about 16,000 today. Hurricane Marilyn in 1995 wreaked havoc with the local economy, but Ron Dillman, the paper's c.e.o., says things are looking up. "You ever see a Gannett paper that wasn't profitable?" he says. "We were — and are — profitable." Dillman says he first heard that his paper had been sold to Prosser on the radio.

And how does Prosser make his money? Among other things, if Gannett's executives read the SEC filings of Prosser's company, Atlantic Tele Network (ANK), they would know that a declining but major source of ANK's revenue con-

sidiary, Vitelco, the Virgin Islands telephone company. And last May Schneider played a crucial role in obtaining five years of income, excise, property, and customs tax abatements — worth an estimated \$23 to \$35 million — for Vitelco. The huge abatements were controversial, mainly because they were granted at a moment when the territorial government owed some \$140 million to its employees (and still does, concedes Hatfield). The abatements also raised questions because they were explicitly designed to protect Vitelco from competition.

The *Daily News* amply covered the uproar about the abatements. But tension between the governor and the newspaper goes further back. According to c.e.o. Dillman, before Schneider was elected “one of the governor’s henchmen came to me in my office and said they wanted to ‘nationalize’ the newspaper” if it didn’t tone down its aggressive campaign coverage. “We didn’t lay off,” Dillman adds. According to Hatfield, Schneider never made such a threat. In 1996 Schneider canceled all the government’s legal notices in and subscriptions to the *Daily News*, a \$60,000 annual hit according to Dillman.

Gannett would not comment on the sale, which was to have been completed before the end of 1997. Neither would Prosser. So whether the paper had been for sale before Prosser made his offer is unclear. The price is said to be \$17 million, but that too could not be confirmed.

Prosser’s rise as a media magnate does not stop with the *Daily News*. Through a new corporate entity, Emerging Communications, he has bought one of the two major cable TV stations in the territory, on St. Croix, and the *Daily News* reports he is trying to buy the other. Prosser’s spokesman says his boss is “looking at other” media acquisitions.

Prosser has promised that he will respect the independence of the *Daily News*, and that no one on its staff will be fired. But some people in the newsroom are dubious, and some, too, are appalled that Gannett would sell the paper to someone with reasons to defang it. “That’s what shocked people,” says reporter Melvin Claxton of the *Chicago Tribune*, who previously helped the *Daily News* earn its Pulitzer. “We became a target for a buyout because we did what we were supposed to do.” —Mark Hunter

Hunter’s most recent book is *Le Journalisme D’Investigation*, a comparison of investigative reporting in the U.S. and France.

SCENE

IN THE SHADOW OF THE GIANTS

The unofficial battle cry of the Media & Democracy Congress, held in Manhattan in October, had been given out a week early in a *Newsday* article headlined: CUT THE MEDIA GIANTS DOWN TO SIZE. Mark Crispin Miller and Robert McChesney — professors, authors, and Media & Democracy panelists — wrote that everybody talks about the media’s ills, “but so far there’s been little serious talk about the democratic possibilities for curing them.”

Cut the media giants down to size! The sinking public trust in an increasingly corporate mass media had some people on the left wondering whether the time was ripe for a unified effort. So the Institute for Alternative Journalism (IAJ), an advocate of independent, non-corporate journalism, called a town meeting. More than 1,000 people came, from mainstream journalists to left-leaning intellectuals to grass-roots veterans to Unabomber look-alikes. “We need to talk about the building of the independent media, about forming networks with activists all over this country,” said Pacifica radio host Amy Goodman (at a panel called “What is alternative about alternative media?”) “It’s the only way we’re going to make it, because the power on the other side is tremendous.”

So tremendous, perhaps, that the resolution to confront the Goliath sparked flashes of grassroots enthusiasm: a few participants boarded a red double-decker to ride uptown and join a demonstration outside the offices of Disney, Murdoch’s News Corporation, NBC, CBS, Viacom, and Time Warner. Back in Greenwich Village, workshops offered instruction in “do-it-yourself-media” and guerrilla p.r. (“the vital craft of framing the issues for a mainstream audience”). Jubilant cheers hailed the crowning of eleven “1997 Media Heroes.”

The heroes may need a little help. Panelists across the board agreed that journalism — inside and outside of corporate towers — needs to take on those important issues that aren’t considered advertiser-friendly: economic injustice, poverty, racism. In her opening night speech, Barbara Ehrenreich, the essayist and author, called for stories about ordinary lives which, she said, have been made invisible by celebrity-driven mainstream media: “The

message that we people of the left want to get out is that everyone matters, because everyone is a star.”

Talk-show host Jim Hightower reassured the crowd that its mission is viable: “What you want is what all Americans want,” he said. “We want our country back from the speculators and the spoilers, from the bosses and the bankers. Get the biggest microphone you can possibly grab and say it again and again.”

Only how to get that microphone? On a

sunny autumn weekend, the networks and other mainstream media outlets were nowhere to be seen. A press conference, announcing a “Pledge of Journalistic Integrity” to be sent out to major media around the country, was poorly attended. On *The Nation*’s “State of the Media” panel, Walter Isaacson, managing editor of *Time*, took a beating in lieu of all the corporate players who had not been invited or stayed away.

If the tenor of the 1997 congress was meant to be

a call to battle, the mighty opponent probably did not so much as notice. On one panel, *New Yorker* media critic Ken Auletta offered his view of what the media powerhouses do take to heart: “These are public companies,” he said. “The audience they care about is not necessarily the community or their readers and viewers but Wall Street, and Wall Street goes by a different scorecard than most in this room.”

New York *Daily News* columnist Juan Gonzalez added to that picture, calling today’s journalists “just content providers, driving the spikes,” while the “information robber-baron” try to figure out which route will be the most profitable.”

At the final ceremony, one of the Media Heroes accepted his 1997 award on a similarly sober note: “The progressive movement has much reason to be unhappy,” syndicated media columnist Norman Solomon said quietly, after the hurrahs and bravos faded away. “There’s the joy of the battle, there’s the human solidarity and connection that we feel, but there’s also the reality that, on many fronts, things are not going well.”

—Konstantin Richter

Richter is CJR’s assistant editor.

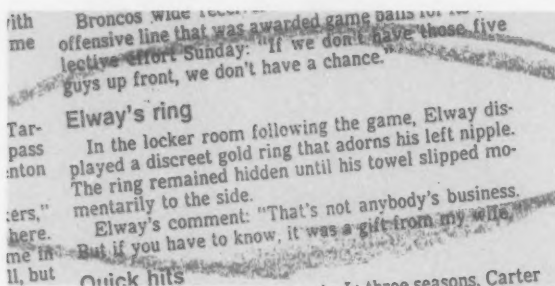


At a “media and democracy” conference in New York, some paused to march on the headquarters of the media giants.

SYSTEMS

CAN HACKERS BREAK INTO PRINT?

No one was more surprised to read about John Elway's new nipple ring than John Elway. On September 22, the Broncos quarterback was eating breakfast with his family as he studied *The Denver Post's* coverage of the previous day's 38-20 win against the Cincinnati Bengals. Eighth in a collection of nine vignettes on the game was a report headlined ELWAY'S RING, hinting that the normally staid star was taking a



page from the book of basketball bad boy Dennis Rodman. It read: "In the locker room following the game, Elway displayed a discreet gold ring that adorns his left nipple," and went on to quote him: "It was a gift from my wife."

That was titillating news for Denver's rabid football fans, but there was a problem: it wasn't true.

Later in the day Elway denied the report on radio station KOA. The next day, the *Post* printed a retraction and an apology from sports editor Neal Scarbrough. The item had not been written by sports reporter Adam Schefter, under whose byline it appeared. It was, the *Post* said, a prank. The story had been sent to the newspaper's editorial computer system by a remote modem and mistakenly added to the column.

The Elway item had all the appearances of being a legitimate nugget for Schefter's often-wacky column. It was provocative, included a pithy quote, and arrived in the right place at the right time. Scarbrough said that whoever sent the story attached a series of computer commands that placed it in the appropriate file directory for sports stories sent by remote. He has several theories about the item's source: a former employee, a cur-

rent staffer, or a competitor who was looking over Schefter's shoulder at the stadium. But evidence for any theory is virtually non-existent.

Theoretically, anyone with a computer and a modem plus a little inside knowledge of how a particular system works could break into print. But newspaper editors and computer technicians around the country say such incidents are rare, and that the key to preventing them is communication between editor and reporter.

"We get lots of bogus items on our system," says John Hamlin, news systems director for *The Oregonian*. There's no way to filter out bad items and separate them from good items. That's what we pay editors for," Hamlin says that a modem and the address of *The Oregonian's* mainframe computer is all one needs to submit a bogus story. But

editors generally have no reason to touch stories sent to the remote bin unless they are expecting something from a specific reporter, he said.

"There is no password protection on our remote system," says Barry Abisch, news tech-

nology manager for Gannett Suburban Newspapers in White Plains, New York. "We make it as easy as possible for our reporters to file a story." But to do so you need to have a little information that only a staffer would know, such as the names of certain file directories, and the exact commands to send the story to the right place. After a story is filed, Abisch says, reporters usually call in to make sure it arrived safely.

Ed Holzinger, systems editor of the *San Jose Mercury News* says it's possible that a determined hacker could infiltrate his newspaper's system, but that it would take a lot of trial and error. After three unsuccessful tries to log into the system, the computer automatically closes the connection and temporarily disables the phone port being used. "At most of the newspapers I've worked at," says Holzinger, "copy flow is not particularly logical unless you're an insider."

It is insiders, or ex-insiders, however, who can cause the big problems. In November federal prosecutors in Manhattan charged a former *Forbes* employee with breaking into the magazine's computer system and causing what the company estimates was more than \$100,000 in damage. George Parente, who was

briefly employed as a computer specialist at *Forbes*, denies the break-in. But according to *The New York Times*, FBI agents found confidential *Forbes* salary and planning documents at his Queens home, as well as documents on computer hacking and sabotage. One was called "The Trojan Horse Construction Kit," which promises to "completely pulverize" a computer's operating system.

—Arik Hesseldahl

Hesseldahl is a free-lance reporter living in New York.

LANGUAGE CORNER

IT'S ABOUT CARING

The article said the lawyer representing a murder victim's family made it clear that the family wasn't interested in cooperating with the media horde, "that the family could care less about exclusives." But if those people could care less, they do care some, and that's not what the writer meant. The phrase has to be negative: "could not care less." That means the family cares so little — presumably not at all — that it can't reduce the caring any further. A quick Nexis search suggests that we bat about .500 on this one, which would be great if baseball were our game.

—Evan Jenkins

For more on the language, see CJR's Web site at www.cjr.org.

ACCESS

THE PRISON OFFICIAL AS PRESS CRITIC

In October, when California governor Pete Wilson vetoed a bill designed to lift a total ban on face-to-face interviews with prisoners, he joined the likes of George Clooney and Earl Spencer: he became a critic of celebrity journalism. Maintaining the original ban, enacted in 1995, Wilson argued that the press turns inmates into "celebrities," and that news media "attention is a disincentive to inmates to focus upon remorse."

California has gone further than any other state, prohibiting all journalists from all prisoner interviews, except those that occur randomly on prison tours, and it may turn out to be the trendsetter. Over the last couple of years, several state

prison systems have adopted measures to lock out what they call "infotainment" shows. True, Indiana and Georgia recently dropped such bans under pressure. But other states — among them Nebraska, Ohio, and Connecticut — have adopted and kept policies blocking out infotainment shows. Virginia allows reporters but not cameras.

So what's their case? Even the most fervent supporters of media access to prisons do not deny that prison reporting sometimes violates good taste and good journalism, and it's not just the tabloid shows. Jenni Gainsborough at the National Prison Project, a prisoner-rights organization run by the ACLU, contends that "network shows constantly focus on the most heinous crimes, as if every prisoner is a serial killer or rapist. They use prisons to sensationalize rather than to educate."

Many prison officials, though slow to come up with specific examples, have castigated the media, arguing that a threat to "legitimate penological interests" overrides the First Amendment. Challenged by the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) and other organizations, the California Department of Corrections defended its ban on interviews with a number of arguments, most of them playing on the anti-infotainment sentiment.

In a statement that repeatedly refers to high-profile inmate Charles Manson, California authorities argued that, "Media interviews tend to glamorize crime by making inmates television 'stars' and thus undermine the severity of penalties to deter crime Once an inmate becomes a celebrity, the danger that he/she will lead or advocate violence or disobedience becomes akin to the danger presented by the formation of a prison gang." Other arguments made in California and elsewhere cite the harm done to victims by publicizing offenders, as well as the unnecessary risk posed by bringing cameras and crews into prisons merely to shoot entertainment shows.

Journalists pointed out that prisoners like Manson often become celebrities before they are sentenced, not as the result of prison interviews. More important, in a California prison system that houses 148,000 inmates, it's not just interview requests for the likes of Manson that have been turned down.

For example, *60 Minutes* could not interview any inmates for its March '97 story about the scandal at California's Corcoran State Prison, where more than fifty prisoners were shot — seven of them killed — in fights staged as sport-



Prison officials say press interviews can turn inmates into celebrities, like Charles Manson

ing events by prison guards. California, says Peter Sussman, past president of the Northern California SPJ, is "using the celebrity issue to keep all the media out."

Ironically, the California total-ban model may prove more resistant to challenge than what other states do, which is to try to make the sometimes difficult distinction between infotainment and regular news media. *Inside Edition*, for one, is often labeled infotainment by prison officials but its award-winning investigative unit has tackled complex prison stories.

In Indiana, journalists overturned the

anti-infotainment regulation by arguing that the definition of infotainment is vague enough to be used to silence critics and investigative reporters. "What prison officials consider a legitimate news medium today, they might call infotainment tomorrow, if they want to get a story killed," says Stephen Key of the Hoosier State Press Association.

Last spring *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution* got the Department of Corrections' permission to interview Curtis Rower, imprisoned for murder, but *Leeza*, a topical TV talk show out of Los Angeles, was denied access. A team of lawyers, hired by Paramount, *Leeza*'s producer, persuasively argued that such discrimination is unconstitutional. The department relented and dropped its ban on tabloid journalism. Authorities did not, however, drop their attitude.

"Should it ever become the case," the department wrote to the *Leeza* lawyers on June 18, "that the Department is required to elect between seeing its inmates used as entertainment resources for TV talk shows, and forbidding all media interviews of all inmates at all times, the Department will act swiftly to elect the latter and not the former."

—Konstantin Richter

Richter is CJR's assistant editor.

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“...Too many organizations have spent too much time obsessing on the information they want their networks to carry and far too little time on the effective relationships those networks should create and support. This is a grave strategic error.”

— *Michael Schrage, MIT Media Lab
Research Associate, in a white paper of
The Merrill Lynch Forum*

The technological revolution is not about information but about relationships, argues technology expert Michael Schrage. In a provocative white paper of The Merrill Lynch Forum, Schrage challenges the conventional wisdom about the impact of digital technologies on individuals and organizations. To receive your copy of *The Relationship Revolution: Understanding the Essence of the Digital Age*, e-mail MLForumRequest@ml.com or visit us at www.ml.com/Forum. The Merrill Lynch Forum brings together leading thinkers to examine issues of critical importance to society. Because creating a more vibrant marketplace of ideas makes a difference.



Darts & Laurels

◆ **DART** to the *Chicago Tribune*, for a brand-new way of serving coffee. In early fall, the paper and the Starbucks company entered into an exclusive marketing arrangement whereby the *Trib* became the only city daily sold in every one of the eighty Starbucks coffee shops throughout the Chicago market area — thus enjoying a freshly enriching advantage over its arch-rival, the *Chicago Sun-Times*. In a not-so-curious coincidence on October 7, the *Tribune's* Tempo section brewed up an oversized, overheated, and oversweetened profile (accompanied by two large photos) of Howard Schultz, Starbucks c.e.o. Headline on the feature: THE STARBUCKING OF AMERICA.

◆ **DART** to the *Omaha World-Herald*, for questionable journalism. With the mayoral election only days away and incumbent Hal Daub unconvincingly denying allegations by seven deputy police chiefs that he had knowingly released erroneous crime statistics to the press and had instructed the police department to withhold financial information from the city council, the *World-Herald* put an eccentric twist on investigative duty. The paper arranged for the mayor to take a lie-detector test at the *World-Herald* offices, hired the polygrapher, prepared the questions, and, on May 8, called a press conference at which publisher John Gottschalk announced the results: His Honor had passed the test and the paper's mission — the “search for truth” — had been fulfilled. So satisfactorily, in fact, that the *World-Herald's* editorial later that day contended that further investigation would not be needed.

◆ **DART** to Donella Meadows, professor of environmental journalism at Dartmouth College, MacArthur “genius” fellow, and syndicated columnist for, among other newspapers, the West Lebanon, New Hampshire, *Valley News*, for abuse of power. Meadows's “The Global Citizen” column on October 4 was filled with righteous indignation about an unnamed “pushy” reporter at an unnamed paper who, ignoring Meadows's suggestion to delay the story, had “fueled rumors” by “exploiting his advantage” over unworldly townsfolk by getting them to answer “intrusive questions” and then reporting on what she regarded as a “private” matter: a land-development plan in which she is the leading principal. Dismissing the August 13 report on her negotiations as “small-town . . . gossip” equivalent to those endless “blood and glamour” stories about O.J. and Versace — stories that “good journalists would cringe at” — Meadows omitted several salient facts. For one thing, as Jim Fox, editor of the New Hampshire *Valley News* — the paper that was “the perpetrator of this enormity” — dryly

observed in an article accompanying her October 4 column, a plan to develop 270 acres for cooperative housing and farming is news in anybody's neighborhood. For another, as Fox went on to reveal, contrary to Meadows's suggestion that innocent people had been manipulated by a predatory reporter, Meadows had done some heavy manipulating herself: she had threatened to write about the reporter in her column, and to point to him in her Dartmouth classes as an example of invasion of privacy by journalists, if he didn't kill the story. “Let us stipulate that Meadows is a writer of great insight,” editor Fox graciously wrote. “But even broad vision can sometimes wear blinders.”

◆ **LAUREL** to *The Jewish Week*, in New York City, and staff writer Lawrence Cohler-Esses, for following the money to the land of milk and honey. When Dr. Irving Moskowitz, the controversial right-wing American Jewish philanthropist, caused yet another international uproar — this time, in mid-September, Moskowitz had handed over a house he owned in an East Jerusalem Arab neighborhood to Jewish settlers just when the U.S. was appealing to Israel to refrain from provocative actions — New York's *Jewish Week* didn't hang back. Focusing on the fact that the source of Moskowitz's millions is a bingo club he runs on the West Coast, the paper dispatched Cohler-Esses to find out more. His September 26 report, datelined Hawaiian Gardens, California, showed how Moskowitz's grand design for the Middle East affects — indeed, controls — the economic, political, and social life of the tiny, poor Latino enclave just outside Los Angeles that is home to “The Fastest Game In Town.”

◆ **DART** to the Allentown, Pennsylvania, *Morning Call*, and sportswriter Terry Larimer, for a case of journalistic mal de mer. His thirteen-part series, “Ports of Call,” was obviously off course even before it left the dock. The idea, as Larimer explained to readers, was for him, along with his wife and dog, to embark in his thirty-year-old, twenty-eight-foot sailboat on a thousand-mile voyage between New York City and Bar Harbour, Maine, in a fund-raising project for Habitat for Humanity. A major goal was to raise \$10,000 toward the cost of rehabilitating a house for “Marilyn,” a divorced young mother who could not afford a home of her own. “My wife and I have long dreamed of retiring . . . and going out to discover America,” confided Larimer in his opening piece, “but why wait to retire if I can blend my job with what has become my passion?” The only hitch, Larimer went on, was that the boat was not exactly shipshape. In fact, because of an unfortunate “mishap” some sixteen months before, it was sleeping at the bottom of the

sea. The journalist was naked in his appeal: "I could use some help . . ."

He got it. According to the weekly front-page dispatches he filed between April 27, when the series was launched, and July 13, when the sailors returned, volunteers pulled the vessel out from its resting place in Maryland's depths, hauled it to Larimer's driveway in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and provided carpentry, wiring, painting, equipment, maps, and charts, as well as hospitality along the way. "Someone will be recruited to run down to Maryland to pick up our old mainsail, which we'll use until the new one catches up to us," Larimer shamelessly wrote in his May 11 report. "Maybe we'll get lucky and find someone to run errands to buy new foam for our cushions, a new propane tank, and new line for the halyards . . ." He also got "overwhelming cooperation from businesses." In short, Larimer ended up with a completely rehabilitated boat. As for that rehabilitated habitat for Marilyn, mentions in the series became less and less frequent, and finally drifted away. Not until July 27 did the *Call's* Phil Boyle report that Habitat for Humanity had presented the young working mother with the keys to her finished \$42,000 home. Only then did readers learn, in paragraph nine of the ten-paragraph story, that Larimer's self-serving trip had raised a measly \$500 for Habitat. "Maybe," the organization's less than buoyant executive director told the *Call*, "we didn't promote it enough."

◆ **LAUREL** to the *Northwest Arkansas Times*, a 14,500-circulation community daily in Fayetteville, for holding the feet of public servants to its investigative fire. On March 15, the paper began an inquiry into the handling of evidence that had been confiscated by the Springdale Police Department in a bad-check case but never sold at auction to gain at least partial retribution for victims of the fraud, as had been ordered by the court. Television sets turned up in offices of the police chief, his lieutenant, and city hall; a computer and printer were in use in the station's evidence room; a deep-freezer was found at the home of the daughter of the police chief's secretary. In addition, thousands of dollars in cash had gone missing. By May 28, the *Times* could report that a number of employees had been suspended, several others had been transferred, the lieutenant — after agreeing to return \$8,200 to the city coffers — had been fired, and the chief had resigned.

Three months later, the paper was pursuing yet another investigation in the public interest. This time, its focus was on allegations of financial improprieties and questionable management practices at Area Connection, a nonprofit social services agency for the the aging with a \$7 million annual tax-supported budget. Among other things, the *Times* revealed that Area Connection's director had used the agency's credit card to charge expenses to his private

consulting business. By August 22 — the day after the *Times's* filing of a Freedom of Information Act suit against the agency's board of directors — the *Times* could report that the board had voted publicly to terminate the agency's executive director.

◆ **DART** to *The Albany Times-Union* and columnist Fred LeBrun, for injudicious journalism. On August 11 LeBrun wrote an update on the fate of Ralph Tortorici, a twenty-six-year-old university student serving a twenty-year prison sentence for taking hostage at gunpoint an entire classics class of some thirty-five students and grievously wounding one who had ended the standoff by grabbing away his semiautomatic rifle. LeBrun argued that Tortorici should not be punished, but, rather, treated for mental illness. The column was headlined THIS TIME, MAKE THE SYSTEM WORK. It put references to the "crime" and the "criminal" in dismissive quotes. It suggested that "with the hysteria of the hostage-taking only a dim memory, the sentence in retrospect seems way out of line." And it revealed, with approval, that, come September, "Albany attorney Kathryn Kase will argue compellingly before the Appellate Division of state Supreme Court that Ralph Tortorici's rights were violated during his trial." It did not reveal that lawyer Kase is married to Jeff Cohen, who, as editor of *The Albany Times-Union*, is the columnist's boss.

◆ **DART** to the *Grant County Herald*, Elbow Lake, Minnesota, for malignant marketing. While other local businesses were doing their part for the annual summer festival by sponsoring how-many-pennies-in-the-bottle games and other genteel pleasures, the *Herald* was shoving an insidious brand of "fun" down the townfolks' throats. In a double-page promotion on July 23, the paper provided forty cryptic clues — each attributed to a different restaurant, company, or shop and accompanied by a photograph of a smiling Elbow Lake denizen holding up a small round box — that contestants needed to follow in order to win the \$100 prize in the *Herald*-sponsored "Snoose Box Hunt." Those puzzled by such clues as "Reach in your pocket for a big juicy chew," and "Split in two what once was one," or, for that matter, those too unsophisticated to know just what, exactly, a "snoose box" is, got another handy clue from a rough sketch in the upper right-hand corner of the *Herald's* spread: a small round box of Copenhagen smokeless tobacco. Naturally, the father-son team that sniffed out the box hidden in the roots of a tree and won the paper's prize was featured in a *County Herald* photo. And naturally, the photo showed the son holding that small round box. He was six months old.

This column is written by Gloria Cooper, CJR's managing editor, to whom nominations should be addressed.

These Men Share One Job With You... Fighting Health Insurance Fraud



Robert J. Arkeilpane
Blue Cross and Blue Shield
of Western New York,
Blue Shield of Northeastern New York
Background:
Former New York State Trooper
Senior Investigator
Medicaid Fraud Control Unit
NYS Attorney General's Office



Ralph W. Cox
Finger Lakes
Blue Cross and Blue Shield
Background:
Special Assistant Attorney General,
NYS Medicaid Fraud Control Unit,
Welfare Fraud Prosecutor
Monroe County DA's Office



Gerard J. Gallagher
Blue Cross and Blue Shield
of Central New York
Background:
Special Investigations Unit
Federal Bureau of Investigation



Matthew D. Babcock
Blue Cross and Blue Shield
of Utica-Watertown
Background:
Attorney

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At Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans in New York State, the front lines in the battle against fraud are often manned by aggressive, former law enforcement officers. In 1995 and 1996, they collectively achieved a savings of about \$68.8 million in their anti-fraud activities with the help of tips that came from customers and providers.

To learn more about health insurance fraud, and what you can do to help fight it, write for our free booklet: **"Close Up on Health Insurance Fraud."**

New York State Conference of
Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans
121 State Street
Albany, New York 12207



Lou Parisi
Empire Blue Cross and Blue Shield
Background:
New Jersey State Police
Director of the New Jersey Department of
Insurance Fraud Division



**Blue Cross Blue Shield
Plans of New York State**

(Independent Licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association)

cracking the church- state wall

*Early results of the revolution
at the Los Angeles Times*

BY CHARLES RAPPLEYE

Metro staff writer James Rainey laughs about his days as a reporter at the *Los Angeles Times* in the early 1980s. He worked on the Santa Monica edition, out of a large office that housed both editorial and advertising. "Jim Leavy used to be the editor there, a big white-haired guy who'd been around forever. And even though we shared the same office, if anybody from advertising ever crossed over to our side, he'd start shouting, 'You goddamned ad goons, what do you think you're doing over here?'"

Much has changed at the *Times*, gradually over the past decade, and now in a rush under Mark Willes, who became c.e.o. of the Times Mirror Company in June 1995 and added the title of publisher of the *Times* in October.

Throughout the paper, editors are sitting down with delegates from circulation, marketing, research, and advertising to develop new sections and new offerings within sections, to establish targets and goals for revenue and readership, and to search for new ways to achieve overall increases in circulation, advertising, and profit. "There are teams everywhere," says an exasperated news

employee. Each team is headed by a business-side executive — a "general manager" or, in the marketing lexicon now ascendant at the paper, a "product manager."

The man in charge of all these teams is Jeffrey S. Klein, a senior vice-president who recently added the ambiguous new title of general manager, news. "We're trying to get people who think only about their area of responsibility to think about the whole paper," he says. "It shouldn't be that the only person worried about the whole paper, the whole enterprise, is the publisher."

From the outset, Willes made change the hallmark of his regime. He sold several Times Mirror subsidiaries, cut thousands of newspaper jobs, and closed *New York Newsday* outright. And, with less notice, he convened company-wide management retreats to press editorial and business executives to rethink the conventions of the industry.

He was thinking about experimenting with the nature of news coverage at the *Times* well before he became publisher. Within a week of joining Times Mirror he asked assistant managing editor Leo Wolinsky go through the paper to see if the *Times* was "relentlessly negative." Willes had the idea that the newspaper "had a way of discouraging innovation in the community," of making risk-tak-



ing less likely. Wolinsky did so and found, "to my surprise," that the paper was not all that often the generator of criticism, though it reported the criticism of others.

Once he became publisher, Willes's determination to let the business side help shape news coverage set off a wave of skeptical press reports, but his ideas have enjoyed a somewhat warmer reception inside the *Times* newsroom. "I'm not worried," says associate editor Narda Zacchino, a veteran of twenty-eight years. "There's a feeling of everybody being on the same team." More than camaraderie, though, it is Willes's promise to reverse the defeatism that has infected newspapers generally — and the *Times* in particular — that has its attractions. "Before Willes got here, the prevailing attitude was that newspapers are dead, and we're going to have to diversify to stay afloat," observes senior metro projects editor Joel Sappell. "Now this guy comes in and says 'I believe in newspapers.' He wants to market the paper more aggressively, sell the paper more aggressively. That feels good."

At the same time, Willes has made clear that resistance to his vision would be dealt with sharply. As he put it last spring, "I indicated [soon after arriving at Times Mirror] that if people had a supervisor or a boss who was getting in the way of ideas and repeatedly got in the way of ideas, that we would work with them and if they didn't change, we'd be delighted to have them go get in the way of the ideas of one of our competitors."

Former senior editor Carol Stogsdill had the temerity to get in the way of new ideas in 1996, when then-publisher Richard Schlosberg moved to combine editorial and business-side responsibilities at the paper's Orange County edition under the new title of president. Stogsdill objected strongly, meeting with Schlosberg to argue for preserving the separation of church and state. To Schlosberg's vexation, several other editors voiced similar concerns, and senior writers from Orange County and Los Angeles signed petitions. The protests were ignored, and from that point forward Stogsdill's influence at the paper waned. In October, after Schlosberg was replaced by Willes, Stogsdill was stripped of her editorial duties.

Willes makes no apologies for his break-the-eggs approach to managing the nation's second-largest metro daily. During an interview in his gleaming, glass-and-wood-framed corner office at Times Mirror headquarters, three floors up from

news, he recalled his deliberations in 1995 when he was recruited to run the company, deliberations against a backdrop of the perception that newspapers were in decline: "If all these doomayers were right then I'd be signing on to an organization that was going to sink, and, if they were wrong, it would be fun to help try to think things through in a different way, to make things turn out so they are wrong."

He returned often in the interview to the themes of innovation and experimentation: "What we're trying to do is to say there are



The Business section is a testing ground for what managers call "vertical" products aimed at narrowly targeted readers.

lots of ideas, let's break open those ideas, let's examine those ideas, let's test those ideas, and you know, sooner or later we're going to find something that works."

One of the early testing grounds for new ideas was the *Times* business section. Beginning under former business editor Bob Magnuson (who became president of the Orange County edition and now holds the corporate title of senior vice-president for regional editions), and continuing under current business editor Bill Sing, the section has become a showplace for specialized, revolving features that explain themselves easily to readers and advertisers alike. Cutting Edge, on Monday, is devoted to new technology; Tuesday is Wall Street California, which focuses on personal investment strategies; Wednesday features two packages, Small Business and Personal Finance; and Thursday is Advertising & Marketing. In addition,

four days a week, the section includes stories on the film and music industries under the standing headline, "Company Town." These features have come to dominate the section, both in terms of space and graphic presentation. Aside from the stock charts, at least half the pages in the section are devoted to the themes.

The idea behind themes is what the paper's managers are calling "vertical products" — news packages that appeal to a narrowly-focused readership, which can, in turn, be promoted to advertisers. Kelly Ann Sole, national sales manager for financial advertising, was recently named the "general manager" for the business and health sections. Sole says investors are a good example of the specific, sharply defined target of a vertical product: "We had a real lack of advertising from financial and securities firms, and a raging bull market." Wall Street California, she says, was a way to get at that market, and to serve a select group of readers at the same time. Now, Sole says "the brokers are telling us that they use Wall Street California to educate their clients. That makes it a must-buy for the advertisers." Sole says financial advertising is up 40 percent over the past year as a result of this new feature, part of a 10 percent gain overall in business-section advertising.

And how does this play on the editorial side? "Bill Sing has more ideas, more solutions, than anyone on the business side," Sole says. (Sing himself did not respond to several requests for an interview.) "Bill and I will regularly sit down and talk about how to make the product more compelling."

Still, the new, more focused business section has its critics. Some of the features, especially with their formulaic format, seem designed solely to cater to advertising sales instead of reader interest.

Associate editor Zacchino concedes that "some of the features started off with the intent to sell advertising." As an example she cites *The Executive Traveler*, "designed to sell to people who don't buy the travel section." But ad sales were not forthcoming, "so they killed it." *Company Town* was another ad-driven concept, Zacchino says. "The advertising department lobbied to run it in the business section to see if we could pick up [entertainment] ads outside the Calendar section." Again, the ads did not follow, but in this case, reader response was strong, so the feature was retained, and then expanded.

Zacchino sees the experience of *Company Town* as instructive, and positive. "The question is what works for the reader. If everyone always thinks of the reader first — and that's the first question we

COVER STORIES/NEWSPAPERS

ask, and the last question we ask — then we don't have a problem."

But the critics wonder if the general-interest reader isn't left out of the vertical marketing mix. This newly focused business section, they say, tends toward consumer-oriented, how-to journalism, and leaves less space — and fewer resources — for broader trends in the workplace and the markets, not to mention investigative work. "It's almost to the point where it's difficult to get a general-interest business story in the paper unless it fits a preordained theme," says one skeptical non-business staff member.

Times editor Michael Parks retorts that business writers have ample opportunity to place their stories in the paper. He holds up a copy of the December 4 edition — the day a record loan package to South Korea was announced, as were Michael Eisner's stock options — and points to five front-page stories written by members of the business staff. "Case closed," Parks says.

If the business section is the forerunner to the marketing strategy sweeping through the *Times*, the new Health section is the prototype, the first section to incorporate all the elements of Willes's new editorial strategy. It grew, says Jeffrey Klein, "from a variety of discussions, from people who were on the business side and the editorial side saying, now here's an issue that people are really interested in, and probably could sustain itself because advertisers are interested in the readers who are interested in that subject."

Michelle Williams, who became editor of the section a year ago, had been the editor of a regular "Body Watch" fitness feature in the paper's daily Life & Style section. Research showed that the column had strong readership, and the advertising department was convinced that, expanded to a weekly package, the section could make money.

"Look at the market," says Kelly Sole. "Health care is larger in Southern California than the entertainment industry." The sense was that coverage of health issues was scattered throughout the paper. "We did [health-related] mergers and acquisitions in business, fitness and nutrition in Life & Style, health-system scandals in news," Sole recalls. "We made a proactive decision to put all of those in one place. We're creating a vertical product, a product our readers need to have."

So a team was put together, with representatives from advertising, operations,

promotion, marketing, classified, and editorial. The team met each Tuesday at 4 p.m. for the next nine months. Prototypes were developed and printed, then run through a battery of focus groups, then reworked and run through again. According to Janis Heaphy, senior vice-president for advertising (who was recently assigned, like Klein, to work with editors in developing new sections and features), the *Times* research department employs two sets of focus groups — one to test ideas with readers and one to test them on advertisers. Each of those is divided as well, with subscribers and non-subscribers on the reader side, for example, and current and prospective advertisers on the advertising side.

The point of an advertising focus group, Willes says, is to see if a potential new section or feature is something "that

throughout the process, but acknowledged a continuing interaction with the advertising side. "I didn't have to deal with advertising on a regular basis" until the Health section planning was under way, "so we had to learn to dance the dance."

Williams says then-editor Shelby Coffey III, who left the paper two weeks after Willes stepped in as publisher, expressed concern about church-state separation to her early in the process. "Shelby pulled me aside and said, 'In these meetings, you know what your job is.' I told him, 'You don't have to worry. I'm dancing, but I'm not smoking afterwards.'" For example, Williams says she never shares her story list with the business department, a pattern she established early on. "I understand the walls, believe me."

At the same time, Kelly Sole feels that she was able to help shape the general design of *Health*. "Michelle and I partnered together," Sole says. "We're trying to find ways to make the product more compelling."

Sole and the other business-side managers seem comfortable with the idea that they should avoid asking for, or commenting on, individual stories, but they seem to believe that engaging editors in more general discussions about content has no bearing on editorial independence. "I don't talk to editors about particular stories and the way in which they write stories," Jeffrey Klein says. "But we may talk about subject matter. Like, is there an area that we are not covering, that we could cover? That goes on every day."

The result of all this effort, in the case of the Health section, is a bright, photo- and graphics-laden package of six or eight pages that runs every Monday. The section wraps literally dozens of snippets from medical books and journals around two fitness profiles each week — one celebrity and one ordinary person — several advice columns, and a lead feature that seems intended to hold readers more with its chatty tone than eye-opening reporting. The lead story for Thanksgiving week, titled "Thigh Anxiety," examined the fact that by January 1, "so much excess dressing and pie will have taken up residence [in the thighs] that normally simple tasks — say, pulling on jeans — will be a chore for Crisco and a magician."

What's lacking in the section is a dimension that Sole said was integral to the initial vision — hard news of the world of health care, from HMOs and managed care to fraud and government action. Also lacking



The new Health section is the first pure product of the ad/edit team system. Critics say its journalistic content is weak.

they're interested in from an advertising point of view." Could such a focus group's opinion be a deciding factor? "The reason for doing that is not to have a go or no-go decision, but to understand the financial implications of whether you're going to go with it or not, and what it's going to cost you to go with it."

In such considerations, of course, is where the balance is struck between editorial and advertising priorities. *Times* managers declined to release any of the prototypes or research summaries generated in producing the Health section. Editor Williams emphasized her independence

Prototypes went to focus groups for readers — and for advertisers.

Willes was "surprised that people think I'm going to do something stupid."

is any sophisticated treatment of new advances in science and medicine. Editor Parks calls it "reader friendly," but to judge by its content, Health was founded on a very low estimation of the readers' intellect and attention span.

Still, it wins plaudits from Heaphy, Sole, and the other business-side managers. "We did our research, we did our focus groups, we got our financials together, and we rolled it out," Heaphy says crisply. "We launched it October 8 and we're already at 80 percent of our ad revenue goals." (The *Times* will not release the figures.)

Teams are now being assembled to reexamine the paper's Travel, Book Review, and Real Estate sections, and to consider new sections designed to reach women and Latino readers, both of special concern to Willes.

Not all of this is new. Editors across the country have been experimenting for years with different ways of packaging and presenting news to draw advertisers and specific groups of readers, and they have often consulted with the business side about how to do it (see "It's Not Just in L.A.," page 24).

At the *Times* as well, beginning in 1990 under publisher David Laveneth and editor Coffey, innovation was a primary goal, and the advertising department pushed for its measure of influence, especially in the "soft" sections of the paper. "There have always been stronger advertising pressures on the feature side," notes Leslie Ward, editor of the *Times*'s travel section for the past seven years. "But we all make the judgment that we are writing for our readers."

Ward says the business-side pressures have intensified, and that her response has changed, under Willes. "There's more asking for things now, things like ad placement. Advertising is asking for more, but they're not getting it. What's different now, is you take the call. You talk it out."

One of her skirmish lines now, Ward says, is special travel sections. Where she used to produce three per year, now there are ten. She is sensitive to the pitfalls of designing a section to meet advertising needs. "You lose space for spontaneity, and I think that's a danger. Luckily in our case, the paper is so big — it doesn't mean there's no room for news."

In the end, Ward trusts the *Times*'s leadership to recognize the limits of manipulating the editorial product, a trust

shared by many news-side employees interviewed for this story. "I think the guy that runs this company is not stupid," she says. "The minute you start putting out a paper for the advertisers and not for the readers, you're going to kill it."

Willes makes the same point, vigorously and repeatedly: "There is no doubt that for a paper the size and sophistication of the *Los Angeles Times*, our franchise revolves around our quality. That's frankly why I was so surprised that people think I'm going to do something stupid with regard to the paper we put out. Because that is the franchise."

He is convinced that modern marketing has the tools to unlock the riddle of newspapers' declining market share. Willes is likely to find, however, that

Mark Willes's determination to let the business side help shape news coverage got bad press, but a somewhat warmer reception inside the *Times*.

some of the central dilemmas in journalism tend to defy such straightforward analysis, in part because a reader, like a great paper, is more than the sum of his parts.

Times research shows that two of the best-read sections in the paper, for example, are Metro, the local news section, and Life & Style. Yet both are shunned by advertisers. Asked why, Willes responds that he simply doesn't know, and that more research is in order.

Regarding local news, Willes was willing to concede that, perhaps, "the Metro section ought not to have much advertising — that's not what it's there for." But: "We've got to think very clearly about the reason for being of Life & Style, how we can bring that out and make it so clear and compelling that it's not only clear to our readers, but it's also clear to our potential advertisers."

Willes expressed his doubts about Life & Style in the first round of staff meet-

ings after he became publisher. Section editor Terry Schwadron reacted strongly, pointing out that the section enjoyed strong readership, and contending that the advertising problem might lie with the advertising or marketing departments. Willes thanked Schwadron for "pushing back," something he claims to like from subordinates. A week later, in one of his first moves as editor, Parks let Schwadron go. He has since joined *The New York Times*, at least the twentieth person to make that jump in the last five years.

Isn't Willes afraid of tampering with a mix which, his own research shows, is especially popular among women — an audience he has made a project of wooing? Readership, apparently, at least in the soft sections, is not enough for Willes. "The question is why do people look at Life & Style, and how compelling is it, and therefore what kind of vehicle is it? Is it a place that advertisers will find productive?"

That analysis gets to the root of Willes's approach. As he put it later in the interview, "The fundamental challenge is to be successful on the business side, because that's also the way we're going to be successful on the journalism side."

Which reverses the formula that made publishing dynasties out of *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*, the two papers Willes cited when asked to name his journalistic models. Both started with great journalism and built their businesses around that.

Willes seems confident that the journalism will take care of itself, and that the destruction of the firewall between editorial and advertising is a "phony issue," because publishers have always had the ability to jump over them.

In place of firewalls Willes is proposing "standards." "Whether there were walls or not, if you were very clear about standards, and you believed deeply in editorial integrity, then it doesn't matter if you have the wall there or not, because you've got the standard. It's the standard that's important, not the wall."

Many *Times* staffers seem ready to take Willes at his word. Others — some inside the paper, and some recent *Times* refugees — feel that Willes has broken something that they consider fundamental. "If there aren't structural barriers to conflict, then there's going to be conflict," says one former staff writer. "It's a matter of what signals you send, what people are being rewarded for. Structures matter. Incentives matter. Directives from the top matter." ♦

it's not just

in L.A.

BY DOUG UNDERWOOD

All around the country, at newspaper after newspaper, the walls between the newsroom and the business departments, once a sacred barrier, are being knocked down, and replaced by a commitment across all departments to the marketing mission of the newspaper — to sell ads, raise circulation, and promote itself. Typically, Craig Wells, publisher of Knight-Ridder's *Bradenton Herald* in Florida says: "We've changed the culture of this organization forever."

Wells's *Herald* has just completed a company-wide program in which, as in L.A., reporters, mid-level editors, and other newsroom professionals were placed on committees with people from circulation, advertising, and other business departments to map out marketing strategies. Included in this exercise was "business literacy" training for newsroom employees. Wells says he wants them to learn all facets of the *Herald*'s business operations.

"We believe as an organization that the more people are involved in the process, the better the product," he declares. "Everybody here is a stakeholder in the company. The strategic goal is the road map to the future. So everybody wanted to be involved. There really was no resistance."

Few newspaper executives have gone to the lengths of Wells. But the practice of involving newsroom executives in business-side decision-making has become

Doug Underwood, a former reporter for The Seattle Times and the Gannett News Service, is an associate professor at the School of Communications at the University of Washington. His article, "When MBAs Rule the Newsroom," in the March/April 1988 CJR, was the basis for a book later published under the same title.

almost commonplace at many dailies. "We've done this for quite some time," says Steve Knickmeyer, managing editor of *The Arizona Republic*, where editors sit with business-side people on committees planning new sports and entertainment sections. "It's become a matter of course."

Knickmeyer, like most of the new breed of marketing-oriented news executives, says the practice simply reflects good business sense in an era when newspapers are under intense competitive pressure. "We've overcome our fear of talking to people in marketing and advertising," he says. "They understand



Craig Wells

there are places where they can't go. They can't tell us what to write. But it doesn't damage us to talk to each other."

Many newspeople aren't convinced. Journalists at the *Republic*, as well as other dailies that have eliminated the divisions between the news and business departments, say they feel intimidated when they write about issues of importance to advertisers. So they often engage in self-censorship, and they don't suggest stories that risk offending important customers. "What happens in that climate — when marketing and advertising become more important than the copy — is that you begin to find you can't do anything controversial and count on management to stick by you," says Kim Sue Lia Perkes, a former *Republic* reporter who now works at the Austin, Texas, *American-Statesman*. "When you are a reporter, you don't want to believe that this is the sad state of affairs of the industry. You don't want to believe that newspapers have become just money-making machines instead of organizations interested in the public good."

Perkes's views are echoed by Mike Meyers, a business reporter at the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*, where top newsroom managers are encouraged to be in constant conversation with business side executives. "Editors have traditionally been insulated — at least in the eyes of the staff — from the counting house," says Meyers. "What has changed is that in the 1990s, editors have a dual responsibility . . . These folks are focus-grouped and New Age-journalism to death. They are doing something to this business to make it a very different business than the one I got into. And I don't like it."

The trend toward overtly incorporating business strategies into the newsroom began in the mid-1980s. Business-side executives started pushing a concept known as the "Total Newspaper," where editorial, advertising, circulation, research, and promotion functions were all coordinated around the idea that newspapers must be more aggressive in finding new ways to make money. The strategy, also known as the newsroom without walls, has caught on at newspapers large and small in recent years. An industry that routinely offers monetary incentives and stock options to news executives based on



Steve Knickmeyer

a company's financial performance has found it relatively easy to lure newsroom executives on board the marketing bandwagon.

Many of the best-known editors embrace their marketing role. Rich Oppel, the well-regarded editor of the *Austin American-Statesman*, says he wholeheartedly endorses the notion of the top editor cooperating with the business side to promote the newspaper's marketing goals. "I work closely with the advertising and circulation and production side," Oppel says.



Kim Sue Lia Perkes

"I think we're a team. There is a lot of mutual respect." For example, Oppel worked with the advertising people at the *American-Statesman* in redesigning the newspaper's bi-weekly fashion section and develop-

ing a new health and fitness section — which he says have sold "a ton" of ads. He supports involving news executives down to the mid-management level in business planning but he isn't "warm" to the idea of asking reporters to do the same. "I'd be wary of that kind of thing," Oppel says. "Reporters and copy editors should stick to the task of journalism."

Oppel acknowledges that serving both the news and business interests can involve "pitfalls" and that members of the news staff must trust the integrity of their newsroom managers not to compromise the editorial effort. "If you're doing traditional public service journalism with vigor and clearly value it highly," he says, "then reporters will understand that it's okay to cooperate with people from the business side."

The capitulation to bottom-line dictates, many journalists say, was particularly intense during the recession of the early 1990s and the recent period when newsprint prices shot up. But even as the newspaper industry has recovered its financial health, marketing and advertising strategies have continued to blur the lines between the news and the business departments.

Here are some of the ways that these strategies have unfolded at different newspapers — and some of the controversies that have ensued.

NEWS AND BUSINESS-SIDE MARKETING COMMITTEES

The *Arizona Republic*, the *Houston Chronicle*, and the Fort Lauderdale *Sun-Sentinel* have led the way in putting together committees, known as "cross-divisional" teams. They are made up of mid-level and section editors and advertising, marketing, circulation, and production managers who help plan new editorial sections, most often in the sports, entertainment, features, or special events areas of the newspaper. In recent months the *Chronicle* has used this new-products committee to redesign its television, fash-

ion, and youth sections, and to coordinate the *Chronicle's* joint venture with a local computer-users organization to produce the group's magazine and sell advertising for it.

The activity for those involved can be intensive. For example, at the *Sun Sentinel*, editors are working with business side executives on a heap of projects: to help market the paper's name in its promotional campaigns, develop new editorial features publications, revamp the editorial content of certain sections of the paper, improve color quality, coordinate the installation of new computer-based editing systems, and develop an employee performance evaluation system.

Dwight Brown, vice president of advertising in the Hearst-owned *Houston Chronicle*, says the newspaper is "very proud" of its use of cross-divisional



Rich Oppel

teams, which also involve top editors in devising strategies for bringing in new advertisers. Brown calls Mark Willes's efforts at the *Los Angeles Times* "brilliant. That's what newspapers have to do." At the *Bradenton Herald*, it is not unusual to find the directors of advertising, circulation, marketing, and general operations sitting in on news meetings. Publisher Wells encourages his business executives to find ways to boost circulation when important news develops. Wells says this doesn't mean the business side people try to dictate news content that might be favorable to advertisers — "they know where the line is. But they are free to join the discussion. What this really does is to strengthen the communication throughout the organization."

Companies like Knight-Ridder, Gannett, and the Tribune Co. — even before Willes and Times Mirror jumped on the bandwagon — have been stressing better cooperation between the news and business departments in their management training and corporate accountability programs. And these companies tend to imitate each other's practices, as witnessed by an October 27 memo from Paul Seveska, a strategic marketing executive with the Thomson chain, to the ten Wisconsin publishers and other business executives who report to him. In it, he praised Willes's "reengineering" of the *Los Angeles Times* and his "introduction of the marketing process directly into the edito-

rial department." Seveska noted that there is a similar move afoot at Thomson "to embrace the concept of introducing the marketing process into all operational functions of our company."

JOINT MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

Journalists may be asked by editors to get involved in marketing efforts sponsored by the newspaper. For example, Knight-Ridder's *Kansas City Star*, as part of its efforts to connect with readers, has encouraged reporters and editors to moderate panels and lead workshops at newspaper-sponsored public forums on personal finance and women's issues.

At the women's forum, sponsored by the *Star* and a grocery chain last spring, the newspaper's advertising department sold sponsorships and allowed advertisers and companies selling products to women to set up exhibition space. Some journalists felt that their participation made it look like they were endorsing advertisers' products and had stepped over the line into business promotion. As a result, *Star* editor Mark Zieman set up an ethics committee, which drafted guidelines that put limits on editorial staff participation in promotional events. He believes in encouraging newsroom staff involvement in the marketing and reader outreach campaigns — as long as ethical boundaries are maintained.

"It is our job as journalists to be in touch with readers," says Doug Weaver, the *Star's* editor for readership and new initiatives. "If that requires us to get up on stage with 150 people, so be it." The key to maintaining the newspaper's integrity, he argues, is to insure that the newspaper, and not commercial sponsors, control the content of a marketing or promotional event involving news editorial staff — which he says the new guidelines will insure.



Mark Zieman

AUTO, REAL ESTATE, HOME SECTIONS

Many newspapers resolve the tension between the news and ad departments by simply handing over production of copy in advertiser-sensitive sections of the

paper to the ad department. At the Newhouse-owned *Oregonian*, for example, the home and auto sections are written by the ad department. The *Denver Post*, part of Dean Singleton's and Richard Scud-



Tim McGuire

der's Media News Group, has turned over production of the skiing, gardening, casino gambling, and some other sections to the advertising side. The editors say that as long as the copy is clearly marked as produced by the advertising staff, they see no loss of integrity in handing over certain how-to, light features sections to the business department. "Gardening is pretty innocuous," says one *Denver Post* editor. "How much dedicated, independent-minded journalism did you ever see in a gardening section anyway?"

However, many reporters feel that a newspaper is shirking its duty to its readers when it doesn't put consumer interests first — by providing copy produced by an editorial staff that isn't slanted toward pleasing advertisers. This issue came to a boil at the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*. Last August editor Tim McGuire met with about 130 newsroom employees who were concerned about McGuire's letter of apology to local car dealers for running a story tipping readers to car dealers' sales tricks (McGuire said the wire story was unfair to local dealers). The journalists were also upset about managing editor Pam Fine's decision to stop the presses to change a headline over a story in the Homes section advising readers not to count on homes as an investment with a high economic return (the original headline read MONEY-MAKER OR MONEY PIT?). Staff members complained that the incidents resulted in "a not so subtle message that reporters, editors, artists, and designers must tread carefully when working on pieces that could upset advertisers," as a story in the local guild publication put it.

The guild recently asked the company to endorse a series of guidelines to insure that advertiser interests don't gain undue influence. McGuire rejected the guild's proposal, saying that the union was trying to intrude upon management prerogatives.

McGuire says the tension between the news and advertising departments is an old one, and the controversy at the *Star Tribune*, which recently agreed to be sold to the McClatchy Co., has little to do with

the company's efforts to better coordinate its news and business strategies. "This debate has been going on for forty years," McGuire says. "So many people overreact when we have conversations with the advertising department. But those who believe the conversations shouldn't take place are naive. It's not consistent with the roots of journalism."

NEWSPAPER TIES WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES

The move toward knocking down the wall between the news and business departments has come at a time of high tension and staff reductions at *The Arizona Republic*. In January 1997 Phoenix Newspapers, the *Republic's* parent and a part of the Pulliam company, shut its afternoon newspaper, *The Phoenix Gazette*. The layoffs included many veterans — including Ed Foster, a reporter who in 1996 broke a series of stories about serious maintenance problems discovered by the Federal Aviation Administration at America West airlines.

Foster's stories had provoked a letter of complaint from William A. Franke, chairman of America West, who also sits on the board of Phoenix Newspapers, to *Republic* publisher John Oppedahl. As reported in *Arizona New Times*, Franke said that Foster either was "biased or didn't understand the issues" and needed a "refresher" in journalistic responsibility. Franke went on to say that the story was "particularly offensive in light of the \$900,000 we spent in 1995 and the almost \$1 million we have spent year-to-date with your newspaper trying to convince the public we are a reliable, low-fare carrier."



Pam Fine

When Foster was let go, it was widely assumed that the newspaper company — which had once lent America West money to help bail it out of financial difficulties — had found him a liability. Perkes, the former *Republic* reporter, who was also let go in the layoffs, says that the newspaper's push to make the newsroom more aware of the company's business interests, combined with the company's ties to the business community, has left staff members deeply mistrustful of the paper's willingness to do

tough coverage of influential business organizations. As Perkes says, "If you look at those who were laid off, you'll find in that pile a very strong core group of very aggressive reporters, people who stepped on the toes of people the newspaper did business with." For his part, Knickmeyer says that most of the laid-off reporters were "fat, lazy, incompetent, and slow . . . People don't want to say that they were not very good at this. They want to say that [the layoffs were] all a conspiracy with the sacred cows and the power brokers. It's just not true."

A number of lessons can be drawn from the controversies. First, there is a deep and growing cultural divide between newsroom managers and their reporters — particularly veteran reporters — who have a strong distaste for

blurring the distinction between the paper's news and business operations. Second, reporters find it ironic that — despite all their talk about serving readers — the editors in many of these market-oriented newsrooms seem to be more concerned about offending advertisers, whose interests may be at wide variance with readers looking for solid consumer coverage. Third, the critics claim that newspapers are looking needlessly desperate in adopting marketing tactics at a time when the economy is surging and newspapers are reporting record profits. Finally, they note that, despite more than a decade of pushing marketing solutions to newspapers' problems, daily circulation is still stagnant or dropping — and that all these marketing strategies simply don't seem to be paying off.

At the same time, there also is a growing weariness in newsrooms — a sense that, unlike times past, the aggressive movement of marketing into the newsroom may not be just another management push that is going to go away. "It used to be that you'd see lots of papers go through cycles," says one veteran *Kansas City Star* reporter. "Some editor would declare, 'I have to have a big bonus this year.' So, he'd come up with some ideas and all the editors below would march in lockstep. Then they'd move on to some other fad." But now, he says, with the coming of the newsroom without walls, "I just don't know . . . The more you cross that line between news and business — it's a slippery slope. Down you go." ♦



Ed Foster

JOHN SAVORA

why Willes is wrong

BY WILLIAM F. WOO



On a recent Friday in Los Angeles, the *Times* arrived at my hotel room door. The paper was fat, and at 25 cents (the new, lowered price) and 168 pages, it was a terrific bargain.

There were nine pieces on page one, each with a *Times* byline. The headlines were modest, as were the four photographs and the single graphic. The closest thing to soft news was an article about how public opinion was turning against a mother whose two children were killed by a train while she slept.

The entire front section contained thirty-one stories, in addition to a lot of briefs and summaries. It was all hard, serious news, and it also was a marketer's nightmare, one that you would hide from any focus group. I cannot imagine that the redesigned *Los Angeles Times* will resemble it when it appears some time in 1998. Publisher Mark Willes talks about a new look that will feature bigger headlines, bigger pictures, and more graphics — a look that, as he has been saying, “grabs the readers and pulls them in.”

The paper I read that Friday reflected a view of news very different from the one that seems inherent in Willes's idea of the *Times* to come. That view holds that people are inherently curious and that there are many serious issues that men and women not only need to know about but will want to know about; that the newspaper's job is to report and present these issues, intelligently and clearly, and that if this job is done well people will come into the paper. This view rejects the assumption that the front page should act as a nightclub skill, hustling customers off the sidewalk.

Jeffrey S. Klein, a senior vice-president who now is also general manager, news, and the new editor, Michael Parks, both argue that the integrity of the people at the *Times* stand as a guarantee against any manipulation of news for business considerations. Klein made that point on a National Public Radio program called *On the Media*. As it hap-

pened, I was also on that show and I tried to say that while good people are crucial, Klein's argument is beside the point. No one is impugning the integrity of the executives at the *Times*. Parks has had a distinguished reporting career and may well develop into a great editor. Klein's record on free press issues — he is a former First Amendment lawyer — appears impeccable. Willes brings to his job an impressive background in academia, the Federal Reserve system, and business.

But the question is not whether the people running the *Times* have honorable intentions. The question is whether the system Willes has installed is good for the paper and whether it should be a model for other papers.

Already a *Times* advertising-side employee has asked a business reporter, Debora Vrana, if a press release could run on a certain page. The employee was later rebuked and the incident dismissed as “human error.” Why am I not reassured?

Would this “error” have occurred under the old system? I doubt it. The new structure, which at least at the top centralizes business and editorial functions, inevitably increases the possibility for “human error.” If people assume that no walls means no walls, they will take their values, culture, assumptions, and problems across the divide that once existed to prevent such traffic. What about situations that lack the clarity of this howling impropriety, when the disagreements are a matter of competing judgments and resolutions involve compromise? Anyone would be naive to assume that when the institutional environment is turbid, as it may become at the *Times*, news judgments can be insulated from non-news considerations.

Obviously, the separations between news and business result in operational traffic jams, and these can be troublesome in an era when competitive circumstances reward those who move swiftly. But although quickness off the mark is admirable, a system that slows the action down may not be entirely a bad thing. For it is not quickness off the mark that ultimately counts for the most; it is where you end up. Knowing where to go often takes some thinking time, as well as freedom from back-seat driving.

The leaders at the *Times* also make the

point that what has happened there is scarcely revolutionary. They are right. Editorial and business sides all over the place have been cohabiting with varying degrees of intimacy for years. It also is no news that editors are soldiering through marketing wars. As in the unisex military, the training throws them together with new associates — in this case, business executives.

What is different now is that the organization being integrated is the *Los Angeles Times*, the paper that gives its readers a nine-story front, without grabbers, and that has still managed to grow its circulation up to 1,068,812 on weekdays and 1,361,988 on Sundays. What is different is that the *Times* is among the handful of papers that not only consistently produces superior journalism but also has stood as a redoubt for the embattled principle that while, yes, editors and business executives need to cooperate on matters of importance to the paper, an organizational firebreak must be maintained to keep news judgments and decisions as free as possible from considerations of commerce.

The journalist's ethic reflected in that Friday front page is incompatible with the priorities of the marketer. If you lose faith that this ethic is essential both to a newspaper's survival and prosperity, then you have lost faith in an assumption that is quite fundamental to journalism: that there resides in the public a curiosity driven by intelligence and buttressed by the knowledge that the more one understands, even about things whose connections to the moment may be invisible, the better equipped one is to make the informed judgments of free men and women.

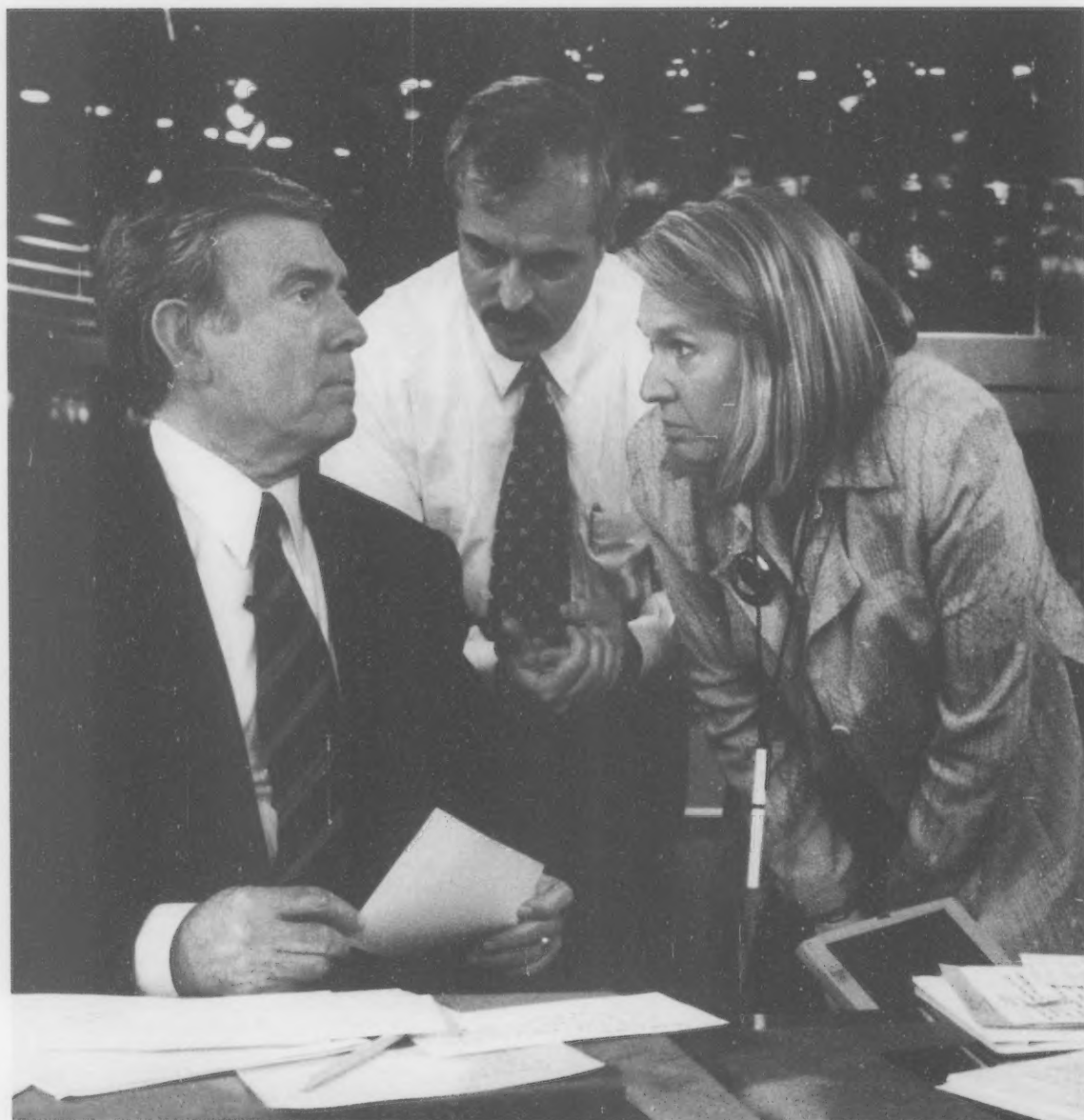
I think that what Willes is doing is a bad idea. Even so, journalism will go on. We have had bad ideas before in our business but the old ideals still survive — fierce independence and dedicated public service and the determined protection of news values not only from enemies but also from friends who would subordinate them, dilute them, transform them into something more contemporary — and cramped, as well. Into something aimed at nothing more capacious than filling a niche in the lives of readers. It is always a fight to sustain these ideals. I only wish the *Times* had not made that struggle even more difficult. ♦

William F. Woo, editor of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch from 1986 to 1996, teaches journalism at Stanford and the University of California at Berkeley.

TV & RADIO

CAN CBS NEWS

Demoralizing budget cuts, drooping morale, and an aged audience have left the once-proud Tiffany of the trade with nowhere to go but up.



In the CBS News anchor studio, election night, 1996: Dan Rather confers with division president Andrew Heyward and with CBS polling expert Kathy Frankovic.

COME BACK?

BY NEIL HICKEY

Quo vadis CBS News? Whither goest the erstwhile Tiffany network's once-proud juggernaut of a news division? It's an issue — part perception, part reality — that hangs in the air like a dark nimbus over the network of Paley, Stanton, Murrow, Cronkite, and Friendly. A survey in September of the nation's TV and radio news directors dramatized the perception: 51 percent consider NBC News the strongest broadcast news organization; 29 percent think ABC News is best, and CNN is top-rated by 16 percent. Four percent voted for CBS News.

Then there's the reality. In the 1996-97 broadcast year that ended in September, the *CBS Evening News* had its lowest rating since 1951, though it competed much more strongly in the closing months of 1997. *This Morning*, in successive incarnations over many years, has never been more than a feeble, hapless, hard-luck challenger to the *Today* show and *Good Morning America*. The Sunday morning *Face the Nation* half-hour interview program is a distant also-ran against its more comprehensive hour-long competitors, NBC's *Meet the Press* and ABC's *This Week*. *48 Hours* is hardly more than a sacrificial lamb to NBC's mega-hit hospital series *ER*, the top-rated show in prime time. Bryant Gumbel — enticed away from NBC with a reported seven-year, \$35 million contract — gets lower ratings with his *Public Eye* newsmagazine than fading sitcoms like *Ellen* and *Third Rock from the Sun*. The network's fledgling cable channel, *Eye on People*, so far hasn't reached nearly enough households to be successful, and may never. Dan Rather, the news division's only indispensable man, is 66, within sight of retirement, but without an heir on CBS News's depleted players' bench.

The twenty-nine-year-old *60 Minutes* is still the most successful program — of any sort — in television history, but its founder and still-helmsman Don Hewitt is 75, and then there's Mike Wallace, 79,

Andy Rooney, 79, and Morley Safer, 66 — with no comparable murderers' row in sight. And its audience, with a median age of 57.3, is the oldest for any prime time program on any network. Susan Molinari was the first congressperson to march straight from Capitol Hill to TV news without stopping at Go, but her performance on *Saturday Morning* has left most observers, inside and outside the network, persuaded once and for all that politicians make dreadful TV newsmen.

Taken together, CBS News's problems constitute a cautionary tale about the fate of a renowned news organization whose corporate overseers debilitated it by cutting muscle and bone in the effort to boost profitability — but lost an aura of greatness that may never be recovered.

Land mines mark the perilous terrain through which CBS News is navigating.

"IF SOME OF THESE PROBLEMS HAD BEEN ADDRESSED A LONG TIME AGO, THEY WOULDN'T FIND THEMSELVES IN THIS POSITION."

All of the network's owned-and-operated TV stations (14) and radio stations (175) are now the domain of 53-year-old Mel Karmazin, a fabled dynamo in the radio business. He's a member of the CBS board and also CBS's largest stockholder, with ten million shares worth about \$300 million, or 1.7 percent of the total. His reputation as a tough, take-no-prisoners budget slasher is well-established. Media analysts muse that the street-smart Karmazin is swinging bats in the on-deck circle waiting to replace CBS chairman Michael Jordan when Jordan reaches mandatory retirement age of sixty-five four years from now

— if not before. That might presage one more cycle of convulsive budget cuts at CBS News, which already is in tatters following the reckless, scorched earth rollbacks of former CBS owner Laurence Tisch, who left in his wake the rag and bone shop that was once the most renowned broadcast news organization in broadcast history. CBS News bureaus at home and abroad have been shuttered in serial rounds of retrenchment.

But CBS News is not fully the master of its own fate. In December 1993, the network lost National Football League games when Tisch declined to outbid Rupert Murdoch for a sport that had drawn millions of viewers to the web for decades. Then in April 1994, as part of a half-billion-dollar deal between Murdoch and entrepreneur Ron Perlman's New World Television, nine of CBS's most important affiliates switched to Murdoch's Fox Network. That double-barreled catastrophe wounded the network's sinew, and it has never recovered.

For the news division, the misfortune meant that some important big-city stations — in Dallas, Atlanta, Cleveland, Milwaukee, Detroit, elsewhere — were no longer receiving CBS News's output or providing coverage to the network of fast-breaking news in their markets. In Detroit, the current CBS-owned station, WWJ, is a puny UHF (Channel 62) with no news department at all. That means that an air disaster or terrorist bombing in Detroit probably won't get on CBS's air until a TV news team from the Grand Rapids affiliate, or farther, shows up to feed the network — almost surely making CBS the last with the least. "That's one of those micro-problems that should have been addressed a long time ago," says one midwest affiliate manager. "With good planning and execution, they wouldn't find themselves in this position."

By far the most public and regrettable display of CBS News's systemic weakness happened on Saturday night, August 30, when the network was hours later than every other broadcaster in offering live coverage of the events surrounding Princess Diana's death in Paris. CBS News president Andrew

Neil Hickey is *CJR*'s editor at large.

"WE NEED TO PULL OURSELVES UP AND KICK SOME ASS."

Heyward was at a Westchester County dinner party on that Labor Day weekend (supposedly, his beeper did not operate in that geographic "black hole"). And nobody else — fearful, perhaps, of taking responsibility for expensive coverage — gave the order to swarm the story. Bewildered affiliate managers phoned CBS demanding to know what was wrong. The crash had occurred at 6:30 P.M. Eastern Time, and it was past midnight, after Diana's death, when Heyward got the word. But CBS still did not preempt pro wrestling matches running on many affiliates. It was 1:15 A.M. when Heyward opted to use coverage from Britain's Sky TV satellite service, and CBS News itself didn't get on the air until 9:00 A.M. "It was a complete meltdown at every level," said one station executive later. CBS News had suffered its worst black eye in years. Heyward assumed the blame, then deposed longtime vice president Lane Venardos, installed London bureau chief Marcy McGinnis as the boss of hard news coverage in New York, and imposed procedures aimed at preventing future such calamities.

In its program decisions, CBS News has often displayed a tin ear. One of its most spectacular flame-outs was the awkward harnessing of Dan Rather and Connie Chung as co-anchors of the *Evening News*, a union that lasted only two years,

1993 to 1995, and was widely seen as the dumbest idea since ABC News briefly tried the same thing with Harry Reasoner and Barbara Walters back in 1976. In a recent effort to jazz up *60 Minutes*, a Greek chorus of Stanley Crouch, Molly Ivens, and P.J. O'Rourke was hired to rotate as commentators, but the feature misfired badly and was junked after only six weeks. In October, CBS News offered newspaper reporters, nationwide, "finders' fees" of \$500 to \$1,000 for tips leading to stories that make it onto CBS News's programs. But print editors warned their staffs that any reporter who fed tips to CBS without offering them to their paper first would quickly be looking for a new job.

As a partial antidote to its current deficiencies, CBS News has conferred with CNN about merging some of their operations. Such an extraordinary tactic would quickly give CBS a desirable 24-hour outlet for its news (like NBC's CNBC and MSNBC), and access to CNN's impressive string of thirty-four news bureaus abroad — far more extensive than CBS's own eleven. Does such a marriage make sense? CBS chairman Jordan appears to think so. In an interview with students at New York University in October, the tall, soft-spoken, vaguely rumbled Jordan (a former Pepsico

executive with only twenty-six months' acquaintanceship with television) acknowledged that there had indeed been contact between the two news organizations. "Everybody has looked for ways to amortize the cost of newsgathering," he said, "to spread the infrastructure costs," and to "crack the nut" of the high price tag of covering news for television. "We will see more initiatives in that direction," he added.

Jordan also noted that TV news across the board "is a business with decreasing audiences." For the 1996-97 broadcast year that ended September 30, viewership of the three-network evening newscasts continued to decline — down another 3 percent, or about 650,000 households. Overall, the three-network share of the

audience for early evening news has plummeted about twenty points in twenty years, to 55 percent of tuned-in households.

For any TV news division, that dinner-hour news program is its signature and showcase. And the biggest predictor of its ratings success is: how hefty an audience do its affiliates deliver as a lead-in. At CBS, the owned-and-operated television stations are underachievers, most conspicuously in the crucial New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles markets. CBS's flagship station in New York, WCBS, lags well behind WABC and WNBC. Thus, when Dan Rather's face appears on CBS at 6:30 in New York, a large percentage of his potential audience is tuned to other stations, and there's precious little he can do about it no matter how good his broadcast is. In fact, it's regularly as good as — and often more enlightening and better crafted than — those of Tom Brokaw and Peter Jennings.

There's an opposite side to that coin. CBS's prime time entertainment schedule has long attracted an older audience than that of the other broadcast networks. That fact rankles many local station managers, whose 11:00 P.M. newscasts inherit that less desirable viewership. "We have to live with that every day when we look at our eleven o'clock news numbers," says a major CBS affiliate station manager who requested anonymity. "If the demographics aren't there, then our advertising rates are lower." So one of the biggest negative effects of CBS on local news operations is something that CBS News can't control — the network's audience overall is too old, at least for many advertisers who prefer the more ardent buying habits of younger folk.

That same executive says that CBS is several years late in launching its Eye on People cable channel, for which CBS News will supply most of the content — much of it from the division's stockpile of old documentaries and news features. "Look what a smart move NBC made in creating MSNBC. It's a great vehicle to promote and showcase their news talent." He's still a great booster of CBS, the executive said, and there are still some "quality people" throughout the organization. "But it's sad to see the infrastructure so rickety, almost as though it could crumble at any moment." That's dramatically apparent on stories like Diana, he claims. "You can say, 'This person was out of touch' or 'That person didn't do his or her job,' but if you're going to have a news organization, you must have tough procedures to handle crisis news. I don't



CBS chairman Michael Jordan, a former Pepsico executive and a newcomer to television, is searching for ways to spread the costs of newsgathering. Says he: "We will see more initiatives in that direction."

think I'm oversimplifying to say that some of those procedures just don't seem to be in place at CBS News."

Bench strength is yet another challenge. In Washington, for example, only the solid and authoritative Bob Schieffer can be thought a household name, while ABC boasts Ted Koppel, Cokie Roberts, Sam Donaldson, and Chris Wallace; NBC has Tim Russert, Andrea Mitchell, Lisa Myers, and Brian Williams. And while reporter John Roberts is sometimes seen as a possible heir to the *Evening News* anchor desk, his experience isn't a patch on Rather's, and most affiliates are hoping for more star power when the terrible moment of Rather's departure arrives.

Many newsmen outside CBS declare themselves amazed that CBS News competes as well as it does, given its anemia in the last dozen years induced by budgetary bloodletting — staff reductions, bureau closings, travel restrictions, salary cuts. Its onscreen talent, producers, and support staff regularly "do the impossible" with what they have to work with, and "that has tended to compensate for a shortage of resources," says former CBS News Washington bureau chief Barbara Cochran, now president of the Radio-Television News Directors Association. Still, grumbling in the ranks has been the favorite indoor sport at CBS News's West Fifty-seventh Street headquarters for many years, usually directed at whoever is sitting

ing the news presidency in January 1996. He owns eleven national Emmy Awards.

Howard Kennedy, chairman of the CBS-TV affiliates board and general manager of KMTV in Omaha, says that staffers and various keepers of the flame who nostalgically recall the great days of CBS News's hegemony can have one of two attitudes. "Either they can moan, 'Woe is me,' 'Things are rotten,' 'I remember when . . . ' Or they can say, 'We need to pull ourselves up by our bootstraps and go kick some ass.'" At a CBS affiliates meeting in October, Kennedy and his fellows gave the beleaguered Heyward a vote of confidence, advised him not to develop a "bunker mentality," and suggested he be "aggressive and thoughtful and all the things he's been in the past."

Even some topmost CBS News executives regularly express dismay with the way things are going, not least Don Hewitt, the creator and still boss of the exorbitantly successful *60 Minutes*, which contributes a large percentage of the CBS network's total revenue. His com-



Radio legend Mel Karmazin controls all of CBS's owned-and-operated TV and radio stations, and is a possible heir to c.e.o. Jordan. His cost-cutting talents are legendary in the industry.

CBS NEWS ONCE HAD "A DEPTH OF TALENT THAT NO OTHER NETWORK COULD TOUCH."

in the president's office. For the last three years, that's been the forty-seven-year-old, bandito-mustachioed, fast-talking Andrew Heyward. Straight out of college (Harvard, magna cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa) he landed a job as a production assistant at New York's Channel 5, an independent station, and at 23 was producer of its late news. He moved to WCBS as a news writer and in 1978 became head of its six o'clock news program. He went to CBS as a field producer for the *Evening News* in 1981 — the year Walter Cronkite turned over to Dan Rather the anchor chair from which he had dominated the network news business for a decade. (Cronkite's departure was the beginning of the end of CBS News's ascendancy.) Heyward created in 1987 *48 Hours*, a series that has earned a shelf full of awards (Peabody, Ohio State, Overseas Press Club) while never approaching the profitability or popularity of *60 Minutes*. He ran *Eye to Eye* with Connie Chung for a year, then took over the evening news broadcast before assum-

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called "Liars, Incompetents, Distorters: Who Believes Journalists Anymore?" Amassing huge audiences is now "the most important activity in television news," he said, and the only goal is money. He knows for a fact, said Scheffler, that the networks use audience research and focus groups to find out what interests specific demographic groups, and then tailor stories to appeal to them. *60 Minutes* doesn't do that yet, said Scheffler, but if the program's audience and income slump "I wouldn't bet that it won't happen to us. If I sound pessimistic, I am."

Vocal unrest at CBS News extends to camera operators, sound recordists, and other technical folk among the 1,300 members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers employed at the network whose contract at this moment is being renegotiated. CBS's initial proposals arrived with an ominous cover letter from James F. Sirmons, the network's chief negotiator. "Some of you will be shocked by the nature and extent of these proposals," he warned. "The networks, all of us, have a major problem with diminished audience and increased costs. Making a profit on the entertainment side is virtually unheard of . . . We fully appreciate the extreme nature of these proposals. We hope you understand [they] are serious . . ."

In a flyer bearing the insignia of the Unity Committee of the four IBEW locals

60 LASHES



Don Hewitt

Don Hewitt is the founder and executive producer of 60 Minutes. He offered his views on the state of TV news in an October speech to the Institute for Public Relations and Education. Excerpts:

I fear that confidence in broadcast journalism is eroding — that a grand and glorious American institution is in danger of fading from view and may all but vanish by the end of the century. The measure of how CBS News, NBC News, and ABC News were performing used to be the kudos they got from the public, their colleagues, and competitors. Today the measure is: what kind of promotable stories can they air to lure viewers away from the sitcom opposite them on another channel? But you can't compete with a sitcom unless you have no compunction about being something you aren't — or at the very least, something you shouldn't be.

I would like to believe that if the founding fathers of broadcasting — CBS's Bill Paley, NBC's David Sarnoff, and ABC's Leonard Goldenson — were still around, they would stand fast for what was, for them, an article of faith: news is news and entertainment is entertainment, and crossing the line between them is often dishonest and always bad broadcasting. Today, that line is crossed and crisscrossed, and nobody gives a damn. With a few lonely exceptions in that plethora of so-called "news" magazines and syndicated talk shows that fill so much television time, the kind of tasteful and important journalism that made the three network news departments giants in the news business is — for the most part — gone, and nobody seems to care.

I think the floodgates were opened when the three networks allowed their owned-and-operated stations to dig down in the mud for syndicated talk shows that are little more than cesspools overflowing into America's living rooms. We who work for the networks can't hide behind the fact that these are not shows that we, ourselves, produced. We bring them to the public, and quite frankly, I think we should be ashamed.

(New York, Chicago, Washington, and Los Angeles), an anonymous cameraman responded to CBS this way:

I love this job . . . Even though I've been pelted with rocks, bottles, bags full of garbage; held up at gun point, been threatened and shoved countless times, breathed toxic fumes and been radiated [while covering news stories] . . . Even though I chased down a guy who grabbed the camera from between my feet . . . Even though I've stood like a pretzel under CBS's camera for nineteen years with a herniated disc or two . . . Even though I now spend five nights a week at physical therapy (that is, when there's nothing more to shoot and I'm allowed to leave) . . . Even though I spend an increasing amount of my time compensating for the shortcomings of many non-technical CBS employees . . . Now, after nineteen years, I still love this job . . . but the job is not the Company, and from what I could see of the contract proposals, the Company, I regret, is no longer worthy even of respect.

Also in renegotiation, as this issue of CJR goes to press, is CBS's contract with the American Federation of Radio and Television Artists, which represents about eighty-five on-air journalists at the network (and others at ABC and NBC). The issues this time around are especially complex, says Kim Roberts, a veteran AFTRA negotiator, because of the "absolutely staggering" recent changes in the landscape of electronic news: the rise of the Internet, more all-news cable channels, new equipment, automation. TV and radio newsmen know their industry is volatile, says Roberts, but journalism "is a public trust," and its practitioners deserve a level of security that will free them to "fairly, accurately, competently, and with integrity, gather, write, and report the news to the American public." That requirement, she notes, adds another layer of complexity to the negotiations.

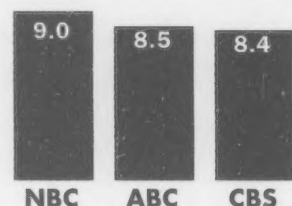
Several AFTRA members on the CBS Radio side are outspoken about their unhappiness. Radio anchorman Bill Lynch, with twenty years of CBS News service, says there's a "great deal of fear and loathing about what the future holds" at the network. He's facing, he says, what could be a 29 percent drop in income, mostly from salary and benefits reductions. Meanwhile, the CBS-owned radio stations are by far the largest generators of cash in the radio industry, with \$565 million in cash flow for 1997 and a billion predicted for 1999. "I think what they're doing," says Lynch, "is taking those millions and gobbling up more radio stations, and handsomely compensating Mel Karmazin and the company."

In an internal memo circulated in late October, employees got the bad news that matching contributions to the company's 401-K plan will no longer be automatic, but will be tied to CBS's financial performance. "We have come to view these benefits as additional forms of compensation, not an entitlement," the missive stated. "The company's ability to offer and subsidize benefit programs depends on successful financial results." Similar unwelcome changes in the pension plan were said to be in the hopper.

Washington-based radio anchorman Rob Armstrong, who'll be leaving in April ("involuntarily," as he puts it), says that the company he joined in 1974 doesn't exist anymore. In Washington alone during the 1970s, Armstrong says, "we had a depth of talent that no other network could touch" — Roger Mudd, Bruce Morton, Dan Rather, Marvin and Bernard Kalb, and others. CBS's "back bench was better than everybody else's front bench." That's all gone, he says. "I'm sad that CBS has chosen to reward loyalty and service — not only my own — with cutbacks and terminations. It's a sad commentary."

Evening News Ratings

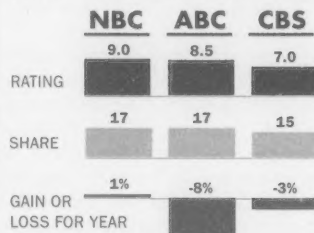
November '97 Sweeps 10/30 to 11/26



Source: Nielsen

Three-Network Evening Newscast Ratings

For the Year Ending September 21, 1997



Combined loss of homes for all three networks: 650,000, or 3%.
Ratings points are a percentage of all TV homes;
share points are a percentage of homes with television sets turned on.

Source: Nielsen

NO LONGER "STALE" AND "STODGY," CBS RADIO NEWS IS NOW HOT.

Despite such widespread sentiment inside CBS News, the radio network is perceived by many of its 545 affiliated stations as having improved in the last year from being "stale," "stodgy," "stiff," and "out of touch" (in the words of a sampling of affiliate news directors canvassed by CJR) to becoming quick off the mark in the live coverage of breaking news. Mel Karmazin is widely credited with jump-starting that momentum; he installed a pair of veteran radio newsmen at the helm — Scott Herman as senior vice president and Harvey Nagler as general manager. A few of their early initiatives were unpropitious: salary reductions for some radio anchors, reporters and producers; increased on-air time for anchors in order to get by with fewer of them; and putting correspondents at the New York headquarters into bullpens instead of offices to save \$100,000 in rent. As the dust settled, though, radio station people around the country began seeing big improvements in what CBS Radio News was

sending them. "I'm very encouraged by the recent changes," says Mark Miller, news director of WBAL, Baltimore. "Herman and Nagler understand the needs of local stations. They're responsive. When you offer a suggestion, it's accepted very genuinely. I've heard the horror stories about Mel Karmazin but I haven't seen any negative impact at CBS. In fact, their product is better, more contemporary than before." Says Dan Shelley, news director of WTMJ, Milwaukee: "Since the leadership change, I've noticed dramatic improvement in their ability to provide comprehensive crisis coverage, and in the quality and amount of news they're sending to affiliates." James Farley, program director of WTOP, Washington, says Karmazin is demonstrating that it's possible to cut costs and still improve your product.

What's the secret of Scott Herman's apparent success? "Basically, I'm trying to instill an affiliate-friendly attitude at the radio network," he says. That means feeding the stations stories of specific interest to their regions and making correspondents available for one-on-one

interviews with local radio anchors. It also means "crisis coverage that gets on the air first and stays on for a long time." About the budget cutting, he says: "We're just trying to put all our money into newsgathering — reapportioning to get the most bang for the buck." Reducing the costs of office space, he says, allowed him to add a morning correspondent. "Listeners don't know from office space. Listeners

owned only six radio stations when Karmazin went to work there in 1981. When he hooked up with Michael Jordan at CBS, he brought with him forty-four stations having an annual revenue of roughly a half-billion dollars. Karmazin's rough-hewn people skills are the subject of mordant jokes in the industry. "He'll never stab you in the back," a competitor declares. "He'll stab you in the chest. But you know where you stand."

In a series of reportedly "stormy meetings" in May, Karmazin persuaded Jordan to give him control of CBS's owned television stations (as well as the radio stations), stripping them from CBS president Peter Lund, who promptly resigned. Thus, Jordan's fortunes are yoked to Karmazin, whose considerable appetite for control is legendary, and who may take the reins at CBS should Jordan falter. Jordan, in fact, recently answered "yes" when asked if Karmazin is a possibility for the CBS chairmanship, adding that he is "a terrific leader" and "has done a good job" running the CBS TV and radio stations. Dan Rather met recently with Karmazin and says he was "heartened" by "a most encouraging

conversation." He found Karmazin "direct, to the point, and aching to win every bit as badly as we want to win." Karmazin is also committed to hard news. Rather feels sure. "I told him a news program is not a mattress. It's supposed to be hard." (Karmazin declined to be interviewed for this article.)

Still, many of the knottiest problems remain. The network dodged a bullet in November when CBS had to give Rather a prodigious raise (to a reported \$7 million) and early renewal of his contract (which would have expired in 1999) to avoid the horrendous prospect of losing him at this crucial moment in the news division's history. CNN had been in hot pursuit of Rather with a tempting offer. The new contract guarantees him the anchor chair until 2000.

Jordan is an enthusiastic admirer of Rather's aggressive reportorial style. Some think "Dan is stiff and very stern" behind an anchor desk, Jordan says, but "give him a bush jacket and microphone and send him to almost any awful place in the world" and he's a happy man. "When-



Susan Molinari went straight from Congress to an anchor seat, but was roughed up by critics; Bryant Gumbel's \$35 million contract didn't help him in the ratings.

know from live coverage and on-the-scene reports, and that's where I believe the money needs to be spent." Neal Gladner, chairman of the CBS Radio affiliate board and vice president of KARN, Little Rock, Arkansas, agrees that the Karmazin strategy, as enforced by Herman, is working. "Mel is not just a slasher. He puts money back into the product. We're watching him pretty closely, but he hasn't done anything yet that scares us."

Nonetheless, Karmazin is the wild card in CBS's long-term corporate strategy, his future role a subject for bemused speculation in the industry. He came to CBS as part of the company's \$4.7 billion acquisition in December 1996 of Infinity Broadcasting, which Karmazin had turned into a colossally successful radio empire. Son of a New York taxi driver, Karmazin became a wildly successful radio advertising salesman. Scott Muni, a veteran disc jockey, has said admiringly, "Mel was Sammy Glick reincarnated," comparing him to the virulently ambitious hustler of Budd Schulberg's 1941 novel *What Makes Sammy Run?* Infinity

TV & RADIO

ever there's a hurricane, we have to chain him to his desk" because he wants to rush out and cover the devastation. He's the "greatest field reporter in the world today," says the chairman.

Rather's immediate boss, Andrew Heyward, sits in the hottest seat in television news, facing more daunting repair chores than either of his counterparts at ABC or NBC. "One of the challenges of my job is that we have to move on many fronts at once," he says gamely. His main priority is to make the network's two hard news programs, morning and evening, more competitive. In the last few months, as little as a tenth of a rating point has separated the Big Three dinner-hour newscasts. He's proud that on his watch the news division has expanded into two new time periods — Bryant Gumbel's Wednesday night newsmagazine and the Susan Molinari/Russ Mitchell Saturday morning program. Hiring Molinari — the keynote speaker at the 1996 Republican National Convention — was a "bold and controversial" step, says Heyward. It outraged many CBS newsmen and brought thunderbolts from media critics and competitors. (Hiring politicians to do TV

news is a "journalistic obscenity," said one former CBS newsmen.) Heyward still thinks she has all the "pizzazz and smarts" to do the job, but the program is performing indifferently against NBC's and ABC's Saturday morning schedules.

Then there's the newly-minted service called CBS MarketWatch, a fifty-fifty joint venture with Data Broadcasting Corporation, a major provider of online financial and market information. It's offering stock prices, business news, and analysis online to homes and businesses on both an advertiser-supported and subscription basis. Another online service called CBS Now has national and world news from CBS and local news from network affili-

even the occasional debate inside CBS about creating a second, week-night edition of *60 Minutes*. "For years, we stood still and let our competitors move ahead," Heyward says, "and now we're making up for lost time. I have the sense that things are starting to come together."

There is, in fact, one potentially major shift in its fortunes that will make CBS News unique among its brethren at NBC and ABC — which are wholly owned, respectively, by the behemoths General Electric and Disney. On December 1, Westinghouse Electric, CBS's owner since November 1995, changed its name to CBS Corp., and is selling off all its industrial operations — from home appliances to

"WE HAVE SURVIVED. NEXT WE WILL FLOURISH. THE NEEDLE IS POINTING UP."

ates around the country. There's also CBS Telenovelas, a three-year-old, 24-hour all-news Spanish language channel that serves mostly Latin America and Europe and competes head-to-head with CNN's comparable channel. The Eye on People cable channel has been gaining ground, though slowly, with most of its content coming from the news division. There's

nuclear power plants — to concentrate solely on broadcasting. That means CBS News is happily free of any further conflict of interest concerns over the corporate interests of a (potentially) disapproving parent. NBC News and ABC News continue to look surreptitiously over their shoulders to gauge the mood of GE and Disney.

Nonetheless, Reuven Frank, former

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president of NBC News, still thinks Heyward has "the worst job in television." His two basic news programs morning and evening have lagged behind the leaders "so he has to fight his way back up." Frank says his corporate bosses, like those at the other networks, are less devoted to the notion that "at least some of your broadcasting effort has to be done for reasons other than the bottom line." Heyward has one thing going for him, adds Frank. "They can't eliminate his job. Somebody's got to be president of CBS News," even if broadcast news shifts entirely to cable and the Internet. "There used to be reasons for doing nightly news on the broadcast networks," Frank says. "Most of them are now gone."

A few longtime TV news experts think CBS News, in its current deflated state, might consider a drastic rejiggering of its role. Marvin Kalb, a CBS News correspondent for twenty-four years and now director of the Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard, suggests that the third-ranked network "ought to do something old in order to seem new." If you're third, he offers, why not be a proud third instead of a frightened third. Worry less about the customary yardstick of TV news success, namely ratings, and "do what CBS used to do better than anybody else — serious, substantive, analytic news." Rather and Heyward would love to do just that, he is sure, and CBS News, even with its depleted stable, "still has the horses to run in that race." It would be risky, he admits; audience numbers and ad revenue for the news division might dip at first, but then rebound as viewers discerned the value of well-wrought and perceptive news programs. And it would win CBS the "respect and honor it deserves as a great news organization that has come upon hard times," as well as help CBS News "recapture the esprit and the tradition that made it so distinctive for so many years."

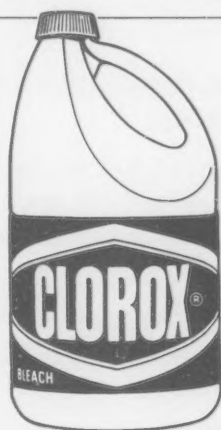
Reven Frank puts it even more strongly. "I'm a romantic," he declares. Conventional TV wisdom says that if audiences are spurning a network's news broadcasts, then go for the gut with mass appeal stories on sex, crime, mayhem, self-help, disease, money, and celebrities. "I say go upmarket instead. Stick your nose in the air and pretend you're better than everybody else! Be a snob!" There's no way a mainstream news program can compete for the downmarket trade, says Frank, "because shows like *Hard Copy* and *American Journal* got there before you. You can't match them. There's no place to go but up."

Dan Rather has a simple strategy. "I'm a hard news person, have been, am, will be. On the evening news, we will continue to be the hardest of the three broadcasts. We are not going to go 'news lite.' We currently lead in quality, we do not lead in ratings. We want to lead on both scores. We cover more international news and we cover it better than either of our competitors — quite a bit better than one of them, which has said they don't think the public is interested in that." (He means NBC.)

CBS News would lead the ratings, says Rather, if the big-city stations owned by CBS had more popular shows, thereby giving the *Evening News* stronger lead-ins and lead-outs. That is Karmazin's biggest

challenge. "Give me Oprah in front of me and *Wheel of Fortune* behind me, and I'll win for you," Rather says. He'd love it if news were immune from the ratings system, and "not judged by profits, but these are the nineteen-nineties and this is the way network news is today."

Nonetheless, he says, "We have survived. Next we will flourish." Tough problems remain, but "the needle is pointing up." Some days, says Rather, he looks at Andrew Heyward and thinks that above his office door there ought to be one of those signs sometimes seen in the saloons of West Texas towns: "Please don't shoot the piano player. He's doing the best he can." ♦



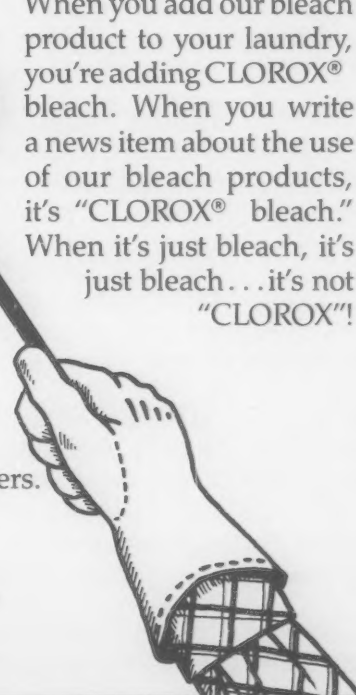
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January 28 **GLOBAL MIGRATION: The Competition for Human Capital**
Moderated by **William Wolman**, *Business Week*.

February 11 **GLOBAL GOVERNANCE: Are Global Institutions a Match for Global Markets?**
Moderated by **Robert Kuttner**, *The American Prospect*, with **Jagdish Bhagwati**, Columbia University, **Clyde Preskowitz**, Economic Strategy Institute, and **Walter Wriston**, former Chairman, Citibank.

February 25 **EDUCATION & TRAINING: Can Anyone Join the Knowledge Revolution?**
Moderated by **Ernst Z. Rothkopf**, Teachers College, with **John Gage**, Sun Microsystems, **Bruno Laporte**, The World Bank.

March 11 **LABOR AT A CROSSROADS: Do the World's Workers Need a Raise?**
Moderated by **Saskia Sassen**, Columbia University, with **John Langmore**, United Nations, **Sumner Rosen**, Columbia University, **Robert Taylor**, *The Financial Times*, and **Louis Uchitelle**, *The New York Times*.

April 1 **GLOBAL TRADE: Do Open Markets Threaten National Sovereignty?**
Moderated by **Peter Morici**, University of Maryland, with **Kimberly Elliott**, Institute for International Economics, **Robert Hormats**, Goldman Sachs, **Thea M. Lee**, AFL/CIO, and **Clive McKeefe**, Reuters.

April 15 **THE NEW GROWTH DEBATE: Has Economics Kept Pace with the Information Age?**
Moderated by **Robert J. Gordon**, Northwestern University, with **Stephen G. Cecchetti**, Federal Reserve, **Steven Roach**, Morgan Stanley, and **Dr. Edward E. Yardeni**, Deutsche Morgan Grenfell

April 29 **GLOBAL CAPITALISM: A Boon or Bane for Social Progress?**
Moderated by **Dr. Alice D. Amsden**, M.I.T., with **R.C. Longworth**, *Chicago Tribune*, **Claudia Rosett**, *The Wall Street Journal*, and **William G. Shipman**, State Street Global Advisors.

The Reuters Forum, sponsored by The Reuter Foundation, is held from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Columbia Graduate School of Journalism, 116th Street and Broadway, New York City.

For free registration or more information, contact The Reuters Forum Director, Terri Thompson, at (212) 854-6840 or (212) 854-2711; FAX: (212) 854-3900 or E-mail: tat5@columbia.edu.

COVERING MENTAL HEALTH

A Resource Guide for Reporters and Editors

This guide grew out of a belief that journalists need to do a better job of covering mental health issues. As a reporter writing about health for the last six years or so, I must admit mental health issues often took a back seat. It's easy to understand why. Less than 10 percent of our health care dollars are spent on mental health. Yet a look at some facts readily shows the need for more ink, air time and Web space.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, one in ten Americans experiences some disability from a diagnosable mental illness every year. The most severe mental illnesses — schizophrenia, manic-depressive illness, major depression, panic disorder and obsessive-compulsive disorder — affect some five million adults.

In economic terms, mental disorders cost the U.S. more than \$150 billion a year for treatment, social services, disability payments, lost productivity and premature mortality, the institute estimates. Schizophrenia alone costs about \$30 billion annually.

The impact in human terms, of course, cannot be so readily measured. Few families escape dealing with mental illness. Mental disorders do not respect age, race or gender. Add to that the misunderstanding, fear and stigma associated with mental illnesses. The result is a lot of misery.

In compiling this guide, I discovered another compelling rea-

son to pay more attention to mental health issues: we're missing a lot of good stories. Scientists are shedding new light on the workings of the brain and the interplay between biology and behavior. Studies are concluding that mental illnesses can be diagnosed, treated, and, to an extent, prevented. Moreover, treatment for some mental illnesses has a better track record than what is done — no questions asked — for serious physical ailments.

Then, too, there's the business of mental health. The stakes are high. Who should pay for this care? Who should profit from it and how much? When is it fair to deny care? The answers to these questions need to be debated. As journalists, we must make sure the debate occurs in broad daylight. It's a matter of fairness to all and the mental health of millions of Americans.

This guide is by no means complete. More sources will inevitably identify themselves. Please contact me if you have any questions or comments. After nearly twenty-six years at The Des Moines Register, I am now pursuing a master's degree in public health at the University of Minnesota. And I am the coordinator of the newly formed Association of Health Care Journalists, a national group dedicated to improving news coverage of health care. My telephone number is (612) 292-0575. My E-mail is voss0069@tc.umn.edu

—MELINDA VOSS

■ ADVOCATES/CONSUMER GROUPS

Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, 1101 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20005 ♦ (202) 467-5730, fax (202) 223-0409, Web site: www.bazelon.org, E-mail: hn1660@handsnet.org. Robert Bernstein, executive director; Lee Carty, director of communications.

Focuses on protecting the rights of people with mental illness or mental retardation on such policy matters as managed care, housing, and quality control. Funding comes primarily from private foundations and individuals.

Campaign to End Discrimination, 200

Melinda Voss's research and this special pullout section were funded by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation.

North Glebe Road, Suite 1015, Arlington, Va. 22203, Mary Gleason Rappaport, communications ♦ (703) 524-7600; Michael Malloy, campaign director, based in Dunbarton, N.H., (603) 774-6634.

The National Alliance for the Mentally Ill started a five-year drive in 1996 that is funded by a coalition of pharmaceutical companies and others interested in fairness to people with mental illness. The campaign works to educate the public, confront discrimination in insurance, housing or employment, challenge negative stereotypes, and ensure fair policies.

Coalition for Fairness in Mental Illness Coverage, 1400 K St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20005 ♦ (202) 682-6039, fax (202) 682-6287. Shelley Stewart, chair.

Includes National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, National Mental Health Association, American Managed Behavioral Healthcare Association, American Medical Association, American Psychiatric Association, American Psychological Association, National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems and Federation of American Health Systems.

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, 200 North Glebe Road, Arlington, Va. 22203 ♦ (703) 524-7600, fax (703) 524-9094, Helpline: (800) 950-NAMI, Web site: www.nami.org. Laurie Flynn, executive director; Mary Gleason Rappaport, communications, (703) 312-7886.

This nonprofit group focuses mostly on supporting people with severe or persistent mental health problems and their families. It has a research institute.

RESOURCE GUIDE

National Empowerment Center, 20 Ballard Road, Lawrence, Mass. 01843 ♦ (800) 769-3728, fax (508) 681-6426, Web site under construction. Dr. Daniel Fisher, executive director; Laurie Ahern, director. Funded mostly by the Center for Mental Health Services, this is a clearinghouse started by ex-patients that promotes recovery and self-help strategies. Offers information on hundreds of topics, including holistic alternatives to symptom treatment, and support groups.

National Mental Health Association, 1021 Prince St., Alexandria, Va. 22314 ♦ (703) 684-7722 or (800) 969-NMHA, fax 703-684-5968, Web site: www.nmha.org. Michael Faenza, president and ceo; Patrick Cody, communications (703) 838-7528. Advocates for funding of mental health services and for making prevention a priority, promotes equitable and humane treatment for those who need mental health care, conducts public information campaigns.

National Mental Health Consumers' Self-Help Clearinghouse, 1211 Chestnut St. Philadelphia, Pa. 19107 ♦ (800) 553-4539, fax (215) 636-6310, E-mail: THEKEY@delphi.com. Joseph Rogers, executive director; Susan Rogers, communications, ext. 288. Offers information and referral, onsite consultation, consumer library. Some information available in Spanish. This center views itself as being on the cutting edge of mental health policy and systems change. Joseph Rogers has been influential in shaping mental health policy.

■ FEDERAL AGENCIES

Center for Mental Health Services, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, Md. 20857 ♦ (301) 443-2792, fax (301) 443-5163, Web site: www.mentalhealth.org, E-mail: ken@mentalhealth.org. Dr. Bernard S. Arons, director; Office of External Liaison (301) 443-2792.

Leads federal efforts to promote effective mental health services and systems. Created by Congress in 1992, the center helps states improve the quality and range of treatment and support services for people with serious mental illnesses and for their families and communities.

National Institute of Mental Health Office

of Scientific Information, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, Md. 20857 ♦ (301) 443-4536, fax (301) 443-0008, Web site: www.nimh.nih.gov. Ask for the press officer of the day; Marilyn Weeks is the media coordinator.

Established in 1946 as part of the National Institutes of Health, this institute supports research on mental illness and health. Offers lots of specific disease-related information on its Web site.

■ MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL GROUPS

American Managed Behavioral Health-care Association, 70J 13th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20005 ♦ (202) 434-4565, fax (202) 434-4564. E. Clarke Ross, executive director.

Members are companies that manage mental-illness and addiction-disorder health plan benefits for more than 90 million enrollees. Clients include private employers, state and county government employees, Medicaid, CHAMPUS, the military health insurance system for dependents and spouses, and other publicly financed behavioral health services.

American Psychiatric Association, 1400 K Street. NW, Washington, D.C. 20005 ♦ (202) 682-6220, fax (202) 682-6255, Web site: www.psych.org. Melissa Saunders Katz, communications, (202) 682-6142.

A scientific and professional organization of clinical and research psychiatrists, this group provides referrals and some free materials and publishes clinical-practice guidelines. Offers a free mental illness awareness guide for the media that includes fact sheets on various mental illnesses.

American Psychological Association, 750 1st street, NE, Washington, D.C. 20002-4242 ♦ (202) 336-5700, fax (202) 336-5708, Web site: www.apa.org, E-mail: public.affairs@apa.org. Rhea Farberman, associate executive director, public communications, or staff.

A scientific and professional organization of clinical and research psychologists, this group has chapters nationwide and provides referrals and some free materials. Offers an excellent directory of experts to reporters.

American Mental Health Counselors Association, 801 N. Fairfax St., Suite

304, Alexandria, Va. 22314 ♦ (800) 326-2642, fax (703) 548-4775, E-mail: amcha@prodigy.net. Beth Powell, director of public policy and legislation.

This group of about 11,000 members represents a relatively new discipline. Founded in 1971, it has chapters in every state except California. Members must have master's degree or higher in counseling or a related field.

National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors, 66 Canal Center Plaza, Alexandria, Va. 22314 ♦ (703) 739-9333, fax (703) 548-9517, Web site: www.nasmhpd.org. Dr. Robert Glover, executive director; Andrea Sheerin, communications (703) 739-9333, ext. 22, E-mail: webmaster@nasmhpd.org

National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare, 12300 Twinbrook Parkway, Suite 320, Rockville, Md. 20852 ♦ (301) 984-6200, fax (301) 881-7159, Web site: www.nccbh.org. Charles Ray, chief executive officer; Karen Zuckerman, vice-president, kzuckerman@nccbh.org. Represents community mental health organizations and focuses on mental health and substance abuse issues, particularly making sure services are available to those in need. Provides public policy information and technical assistance for managed care plans.

■ MENTAL HEALTH CORPORATIONS

These are among the largest behavioral managed-care companies in the United States.

CMG Health, Inc., 25 Crossroads Drive, Owings Mills, Md. 21117 ♦ (410) 581-5000, fax (410) 581-5007. Alan Shusterman, Ph.D., president and ceo; Mafalda Arena, communications, (201) 782-3260; 3.3 million enrollees.

Family Enterprise, Inc., 11700 West Lake Park Drive, Milwaukee, Wis. 53224 ♦ (414) 359-1055, fax (414) 359-1074. Joseph DesPlaines, president; owned by a holding company called Families International, a privately held behavioral health care consulting services company; four million enrollees.

Green Spring Health Services, 5565 Sterrett Place, Suite 500, Columbia, Md. 21044 ♦ (410) 964-1593, fax (410) 740-

8573; Erin Somers, communications, E-mail: esomers@gshs.com. Partly owned by Magellan Health Services Inc. Catherine Campbell, vice president of marketing and corporate communications; 20 million enrollees.

Human Affairs International, Inc., 10150 S. Centennial Parkway, Sandy City, Utah 84070 ♦ (801) 256-7300, fax (801) 256-7662. Jack Williams, president and ceo; Doug Kirchner, communications, (801) 256-7194, fax (801) 256-7669. Owned by Magellan Health Services, Inc.; 17 million enrollees.

MCC Behavioral Care, 11095 Viking Drive, Suite 350, Eden Prairie, Minn. 55344 ♦ (612) 996-2000. Daniel J. Potterton, president; Howard Drescher, communications, (860) 726-3578, fax (860) 726-4968; six million enrollees.

Merit Behavioral Care Corp., 1 Maynard Drive, Park Ridge, N.J. 07656 ♦ (201) 391-8700; Albert Waxman, ceo; Mafalda Arena, communications, (201) 782-3260, fax (201) 391-2411; 22 million enrollees.

Options Health Care, Inc., 240 Corporate Blvd., Norfolk, Va. 23502 ♦ (757) 459-5200, fax (757) 459-5230. Dr. Ronald Dozoretz, owner and chairman; Nancy Grden, communications; 3.9 million enrollees.

Principal Behavioral Care, Inc., 6705 Rockledge Drive, Bethesda, Md. 20817 ♦ (301) 571-0633, fax (301) 881-6569. Bruno Littleton, chief operating officer; Vicki Steward, communications (515) 283-8858, in Des Moines, Iowa, fax (515) 246-5475; 2.9 million enrollees.

United Behavioral Health, 425 Market Street, San Francisco, Cal. 94105 ♦ (415) 547-5000, fax (415) 547-6200. Saul Feldman, ceo; Jim Ventriolo, communications, (860) 702-5154. Owned by United Health-Care Corp; 11.3 million enrollees.

Value Behavioral Health, 3110 Fairview Park Drive, Falls Church, Va. 22042 ♦ (703) 205-6549, fax (703) 876-5644. Judy Barber, communications; 24.2 million enrollees.

■ PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES

For a copy of an invaluable *Reporter's Handbook*, contact the **Pharmaceutical Research**

and Manufacturers of America, 1100 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20005 ♦ (202) 835-3400, fax (202) 835-3414, Web site: <http://www.phrma.org>. Jeffrey Trehwitt, communications, (202) 835-3464. The handbook lists makers of psychiatric drugs in the last section.

■ PREVENTION AND WELLNESS

Wellness Councils of America, 7101 Newport Ave., Omaha, Neb. 68152 ♦ (402) 572-3590. David Hunnicutt, Ph.D., president. Sandra Wendel, editor of *Healthy YOUiverse* and director of communications. Focuses on all aspects of health, but includes mental health; has a worksite guide to clinical depression.

■ KEY LAWMAKERS

Sen. Pete V. Domenici (R-N. Mex.) ♦ (202) 224-7082; Chris Gallegos is the press secretary. Domenici has a family member who has experienced mental illness.

Sen. Paul Wellstone (D-Minn.) ♦ (202) 224-5641, fax (202) 224-8438. John Gilman is the legislative assistant in Washington for these issues; Mark Anderson, legislative assistant in Minnesota, (612) 645-0323. Wellstone has a brother who has experienced mental illness.

Rep. Marge Roukema (R-N.J.) ♦ (202) 225-4465, fax (202) 225-9048, Web site: www.house.gov/roukema. Craig Shearman, press secretary; Lisa Bleier, legislative assistant. Roukema's husband is a psychiatrist.

Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.) ♦ (202) 225-6416, fax (202) 225-0373. Cathie Eastman, press secretary; E-mail: cathie.eastman@mal.house.gov; Jessica Zufolo, legislative assistant. DeFazio is a former social worker who worked with the mentally ill.

■ MENTAL HEALTH POLICY EXPERTS

General

Center for the Study of Issues in Public Mental Health, The Nathan S. Kline Institute for Psychiatric Research, 140 Old Orangeburg Rd., Orangeburg, N.Y. 10962 ♦ Dixianne Penney, Dr. P.H., assistant director, (914) 365-2000, ext.:1873, fax (914) 365-1432.

A collaboration of research entities in the New York State Office of Mental Health

and the State University of New York, this center has more than 70 academicians, researchers, practitioners and policy makers. Research focuses on adults with serious mental illnesses.

Department of Mental Health Law and Policy, Florida Mental Health Institute, University of South Florida, Tampa, Fla. 33612 ♦ (813) 974-4510, fax (813) 974-9327, Web site: www.fmhi.usf.edu/mhlp/home2.html; E-mail: petrila@fmhi.usf.edu. John Petrila, chair and professor.

Has nine permanent faculty members specializing in various aspects of mental health law and policy, including such things as insanity, competency, risk assessment and managed care.

National Technical Assistance Center for State Mental Health Planning, National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors, 66 Canal Center Plaza, Suite 302, Alexandria, Va. 22314 ♦ (703) 739-9333, fax (703) 548-9517; Web site: www.nasmhpd.org/ntac; Andrea Sheerin, communications, (703) 739-9333 ext. 22, e-mail: ntac@nasmhpd.org.

Jointly funded by the association and the Center for Mental Health Services, this center offers consulting for state, regional and national programs, has a consultant database, publishes reports and has standards for review and analysis of service systems.

Managed Behavioral Care

Michael A. Freeman, M.D. and Tom Trabin, Ph.D., The Institute for Behavioral Healthcare, a non-profit organization, and the company CentralLink identify innovations in the mental health field and educate professionals. 1110 Mar West Street, Tiburon, Calif. 94920 ♦ (415) 435-9821, fax (415) 543-9821; E-mail: m a f @ c e n t r a l i n k . c o m, ttrabin@centralink.com.

These policy experts did a study for the U.S. Center for Mental Health Services on the history, model, key issues and future course of managed behavioral health care in 1995.

Sara Rosenbaum, J.D., director, Center for Health Policy Research, George Washington University Medical Center, Washington, D.C. ♦ (202) 530-2343, fax (202) 296-0025, E-mail: ihosxr@gwumc.edu. Prepared report for Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration ana-

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lyzing contracts between state Medicaid agencies and managed care organizations.

Mental Health Parity

Jeffrey A. Buck, Ph.D., director, Office of Managed Care, Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Rockville, Md. ♦ (301) 443-0588, fax (301) 443-1563. Conducted a study to analyze the cost of providing mental health and substance abuse insurance coverage that compares to general health coverage.

Bruce Pyenson, consulting actuary, Milliman & Robertson, Inc. 2 Penn Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10121 ♦ (212) 279-7166, fax (212) 629-5657. Co-author of reports on costs of providing health insurance for mental illnesses and for substance abuse; reports were done for private advocacy groups.

Mental Illness and Quality of Life

Dr. Robert Spritzer, New York State Psychiatric Institute, Department of Psychiatry, Columbia University, New York, N.Y. 10032. To contact, call Carolyn Conway at (212) 305-3900. Specializes in mental disorders and quality of physical health.

Dr. Gerard Clancy, assistant professor, University of Iowa, director of IMPACT — the Integrated Multi-Agency Program in Assertive Community Treatment ♦ (319) 353-6959, fax (319) 356-2587, E-mail: gerard-clancy@uiowa.edu. This program takes treatment to the homes of people who have serious mental illnesses.

State Mental Health Systems

Colette Croze, consultant for state and county mental health plans, 31 North New Road, Bayview, Middletown Del. 19709 ♦ (302) 378-7555, fax (302) 378-6156.

MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH

Boston University Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation, 930 Commonwealth Ave., 2nd Floor, Boston, Mass. 02215 ♦ (617) 353-3549, fax (617) 353-7700, Web site: www.bu.edu/SARPSYCH. Dr. William A. Anthony, executive director or Dr. E. Sally Rogers, director of research; Kathy Norman, director of information.

Focuses on rehabilitation of people with severe mental illness by doing research, training, and dissemination of information

and providing services. Also produces a journal and publishes books.

The Evaluation Center, Human Services Research Institute, a nonprofit research and planning institute, 2336 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, Mass. 02140 ♦ (617) 876-0426, ext.: 327, fax (617) 492-7401, Web site: www.hsri.org. Lawrence Woocher, project manager.

Funded by the Center for Mental Health Services to provide technical assistance to publicly funded agencies and individuals who evaluate adult mental health systems. Can provide information on what research says about mental health systems.

Center for Research on Services for Severe Mental Illness, Johns Hopkins University, School of Hygiene and Public Health, 624 N. Broadway, Baltimore, Md. 21205 ♦ (410) 955-3625, fax (410) 955-0470; Web site: www.hsr.jhsph.edu. Don Steinwachs, director.

Conducts research in severe mental illness, including schizophrenia; economics of mental health, patterns and predictors of use of mental health services, evaluation of mental health services in shelters, patterns of care for Medicaid mentally ill.

Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives, 745 Fifth Ave., Suite 700, New York, N.Y. 10151 ♦ (212) 223-4040, fax (212) 317-8721, Web site: www.dana.org, E-mail: pressinf@dana.org. Barbara Rich, communications, (212) 223-4040.

Sponsored by the Charles A. Dana Foundation, the alliance is a nonprofit organization of more than 170 neuroscientists dedicated to advancing education about personal and public benefits of brain research. Dana was a New York state lawmaker and an industrialist interested in health and education.

Harvard Brain Tissue Resource Center, McLean Hospital, 115 Mill St., Belmont, Mass. 02178 ♦ (800) BRAINBANK, (617) 855-2400, fax (617) 855-3199, Web site: www.brainbank.mclean.org:8080. Dr. Francine Benes, director; Dr. Stephen Vincent, associate director.

Acquires brain tissue which is then distributed to researchers; also does research in schizophrenia and other disorders. This is the premier brain bank in the world and is in McLean Hospital, a psychiatric hospital at Harvard.

National Alliance for Research on Schizophrenia & Depression, 60 Cutter Mill Road, Great Neck, N.Y. 11021 ♦ (516) 829-0091, fax (516) 487-6930, Web site: www.mhsource.com/narsad.html. Constance E. Lieber, president, Anne Brown, director.

Raises and distributes money for scientific research into the causes, cures and treatments of these mental illnesses. Formed in 1986 by a coalition of other mental health organizations. Funding comes from families, organizations, foundations and corporations.

National GAINS Center, Policy Research, Inc., 262 Delaware Ave., Delmar, N.Y. 12054 ♦ (800) 311-4246, fax (518) 439-7612, E-mail: GAINS@PRAINC.com

Funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, this center focuses on developing programs to help prison inmates with mental health and substance abuse problems.

UIC National Research and Training Center on Psychiatric Disability, University of Illinois at Chicago, Department of Psychiatry, 104 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 900, Chicago, Ill. 60603 ♦ (312) 422-8180, fax (312) 422-0740, Web site: www.psych.uic.edu/~rtc. Judith Cook, executive director, ext. 19.

A federally funded center that conducts studies involving people with severe mental illnesses. Focuses on developing family relationships, returning to work or school, living independently, helping mothers with mental illness, examining youth after special education. Also helps patients with HIV and AIDS mental health problems and works in such areas as self-help and peer support, homelessness and mental illness, managed care and mental health services, and treatment of minorities who need mental health services.

Open Minds, 10 York St., Gettysburg, Pa. 17325 ♦ (717) 334-1329, fax (717) 334-0538, E-mail: openminds@openminds.com, Web site: www.openminds.com. Monica Oss, president; Vickie Franchino, marketing director.

A research and consulting firm that tracks trends in behavioral health and human services areas. Founded in 1987, the firm provides publications, professional education services and research and consulting services.

Web site list of other mental health research institutes: http://pie.org/E212_24T3783

■ QUALITY CONTROL

Center for Mental Health Services, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Has developed a report card to help consumers evaluate mental health services. It measures how well services improve well-being, access, appropriateness of treatment and prevention efforts. Contact Ronald Manderscheid, chief of the center's Survey and Analysis Branch, through the Office of External Liaison, (301) 443-2792 or (800) 789-2647.

Foundation for Accountability, 520 SW 6th Ave., Portland, Ore. 97204 ♦ (503) 223-2228, fax (503) 223-4336, Web site: www.facct.org. E-mail: info@facct.org; David Lansky, Ph.D., president; Doug Davidson, communications, ext. 106. A nonprofit coalition of corporations, government agencies and consumer groups that develops quality measures for specific medical conditions, including major depressive disorder.

National Committee for Quality Assurance, 2000 L St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20036 ♦ (202) 955-3500, fax (202) 955-3500, Web site: www.ncqa.org. Barry Scholl, communications director, (202) 955-5197.

This nonprofit group accredits managed behavioral-care plans in an effort to improve quality. Standards for behavioral managed-care plans were developed after consulting with employers, consumers, policy makers, health plans, managed behavioral-care organizations and providers.

■ REPORTERS

The reporters included here have written important stories on mental health issues and have agreed to be accessible and helpful to other journalists. Daily journalists are generally less busy in the morning. Database searches under these names will yield important work.

Steve Findlay, reporter, *USA Today*, has done extensive reporting on behavioral managed care. ♦ (800) 872-3410, ext. 6406.

Carol Hymowitz and Ellen Joan Pollock, *The Wall Street Journal*, did an outstanding

series, "The New Economics of Mental Health," in 1995. Hymowitz: (412) 553-6900, E-mail: carol.hymowitz@news.wsj.com; Pollock: (212) 416-2302, ellen.pollock@news.wsj.com

David Nather, Reporter, *Health Care Policy Report*, 1231 25th St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20037 ♦ (202) 331-5113, fax (202) 331-5102, E-mail: dnather@bna.com

Tom Siegfried and Sue Goetinck, *Dallas Morning News* ♦ This pair did an excellent series, "Science vs. Stigma" in 1996; Goetinck: (214) 977-8747, E-mail: sgoetinck@dallasnews.com; Siegfried: E-mail: tsiegfried@dallasnews.com.

NOTE: In 1997, the Carter Center established The Rosalynn Carter Fellowships for Mental Health Journalism. The fellowships provide \$10,000 grants to five fellows each year so each may complete a project on a selected topic relevant to mental health. For more information, contact Dr. John Gates, director of the center's Mental Health Program at 453 Freedom Parkway, One Copenhill, Atlanta, Ga., 30307 ♦ (404) 420-5165, fax (404) 420-5158, Web site: www.emory.edu/CARTER_CENTER, E-mail: ccmhp@emory.edu.

■ WALL STREET ANALYSTS

Relatively few behavioral managed-care companies are publicly held. And mental health, for the most part, seems to be too small a sector for many analysts or investment bankers to specialize in tracking it. But here are a few sources.

Ken Abramowitz, research analyst, Sanford Bernstein, New York, N.Y. ♦ (212) 486-5800.

Carl Byrnes, research analyst, Lehman Brothers, New York, N.Y. ♦ (212) 526-6081. Focuses on companies that own assisted-living facilities and nursing homes. Sandeep Singal, assistant (212) 526-4900.

Gary Frazier, analyst, Bear Stearns, New York, N.Y. ♦ (212) 272-7548. Focuses on managed care, physician practice management and Magellan Health Services, Inc., a major managed-care corporation.

■ AGING AND MENTAL HEALTH

Carol Cober, senior program specialist,

American Association of Retired Persons, 601 E. St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20049 ♦ (202) 434-2277, fax (202) 434-7683, E-mail: ccoher@aarp.org. Oversees a federally funded project on suicide prevention; the organization has also looked at mental wellness and depression.

National Coalition on Mental Health and Aging, 601 E. St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20049 ♦ (317) 232-7894, fax (317) 233-3472. Willard Mays, chairman; E-mail: wmays@fssa.state.in.us.

Represents about 45 national organizations and federal agencies; deals with public policy issues relating to aging and mental health; studies how states use Medicaid and Medicare to provide mental health services, and examines the impact of managed care on older adults. Has published a book on emerging issues in mental health and aging. This group has its headquarters at AARP.

American Society on Aging, 833 Market St., Suite 511, San Francisco, Calif. 94103 ♦ (415) 974-9600, fax (415) 974-0300, Web site: www.asaging.org. Patrick Cullinane, special project manager.

Has a network of professionals specializing in mental health and aging; can provide national sources as well as some published materials. Publishes *Dimensions*, a quarterly newsletter about mental health and aging.

Dr. Stephen J. Bartels, New Hampshire-Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center, 2 Whipple Place, Lebanon, N.H. 03766 ♦ (603) 448-0126, fax (603) 448-0129.

A psychiatrist who specializes in the mental health needs of the elderly, Bartels did the first-of-its-kind state assessment of the needs of the elderly for mental health services.

■ HOMELESSNESS AND MENTAL HEALTH

National Resource Center on Homelessness and Mental Illness, Policy Research Associates, 262 Delaware Ave., Delmar, N.Y. 12054 ♦ (800) 444-7415, fax (518) 439-7612, Web site: www.prainc.com/nrc, E-mail: nrc@prainc.com. Deborah Dennis, director.

Funded by the Center for Mental Health Services, this group has a database of more than 6,000 articles. It prepares

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annotated bibliographies, conducts specialized database searches and can provide experts.

Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH), Advocates for Human Potential, Inc., 323 Boston Post Road, Sudbury, Mass. 01776 ♦ (978) 443-0055, fax (5978) 443-4722. Richard Becker, director and Jon Grand, senior program associate; E-mail: ahpadmin@ahpinc.com. Assists about 400 programs throughout the country that receive federal funds for PATH programs to provide outreach and mental health services to homeless people.

ACCESS, Access to Community Care and Effective Services and Supports, Center for Mental Health Services, Rockville, Md. 20857 ♦ Francis Randolph, director. A federal program to help communities integrate services for homeless people who are mentally ill. Contact: Office of External Liaison, (301) 443-2792; fax (301) 443-5163.

Dr. Fred Osher, director, Division of Community Psychiatry, University of Maryland Department of Psychiatry, Baltimore, Md. 21201 ♦ (410) 328-3414, fax (410) 328-3311, E-mail: foshers@umpsy.ab.umd.edu. Has written extensively on this subject.

■ MINORITIES AND MENTAL HEALTH

American Association of People of Color Mental Health Consumers, 2825 Bridge Ave., Cleveland, Ohio 44113 ♦ (216) 241-3400, fax (216) 861-5067. David Granger, co-convenor; Gilberto Romero, co-convenor (505) 827-2651.

Founded in 1992, this group promotes the need for cultural sensitivity and competence and deals with issues relevant to mental health consumers of color including those in rural areas and in the criminal justice system.

Multicultural Mental Health Research Center, University of Massachusetts, Medical Center ♦ (508) 856-8717, fax (508) 856-8700, Web site: under construction krcrawford@banynan.ummed.edu. Kermit Crawford, Ph.D., executive director.

National Coalition of Hispanic Health and Human Services Organizations, 1501 16th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20036 ♦ (202) 387-5000, E-mail: cossmho@

cossmho.org. Dr. Deborah Duran, Ph.D., senior mental health adviser, (202) 797-4328.

■ RURAL AREAS AND MENTAL HEALTH

Frontier Mental Health Services Resource Network, University of Denver, Denver, Colo. 80208 ♦ (303) 871-3099, fax (303) 871-4747, Web site: www.du.edu/frontier-mh. James Ciarlo, director.

Conducts studies and offers technical assistance in program development. Focuses on "frontier" parts of the United States with six or fewer persons per square mile. Most are found in 15 western mountain and plains states. The network consists of eight experts in various domains of rural mental health.

Office of Rural Mental Health Research, National Institute of Mental Health, Rockville, Md. ♦ (301) 443-9001, fax (301) 443-4045. Dr. Kathryn Magruder, Ph.D., director. Gives technical assistance to researchers who study mental health issues in rural areas.

National Association for Rural Mental Health, 337 E. Ferguson Ave., Box 570, Wood River, Ill. 62095 ♦ (618) 251-0589, fax (618) 251-6246. Sandy Murray, administrative assistant.

Works to develop, enhance and support mental health services and providers in rural areas. Publishes quarterly *Rural Community Mental Health Letter*.

■ STIGMA AND MENTAL HEALTH

Dr. Otto Wahl, professor of psychology, George Mason University, and author, "Media Madness: Public Images of Mental Illness," ♦ (703) 993-1361, fax (703) 993-1359, E-mail: owahl@gmu.edu.

National Stigma Clearinghouse, 275 Seventh Ave., Lobby Desk, New York, N.Y., 10001, ♦ (212) 255-4411. Jean Arnold and Nora Weinerth, co-chairs. A nonprofit group that tracks and protests unfair media images of mental illness. Promotes accurate portrayal of mental illnesses and use of psychiatric terms.

Daniel Fisher, M.D., Ph.D., executive direc-

tor, National Empowerment Center, 20 Bal-lard Road, Lawrence, Mass. 01843, (800) 769-3728.

■ WOMEN AND MENTAL HEALTH

Patricia Rieker, Ph.D., associate professor of psychiatry, Harvard Medical School; director, psychosocial research, of Dana Farber Cancer Institute, 44 Binney St., Boston, Mass. 02115 ♦ (617) 632-3150, E-mail: patricia_rieker@dfci.harvard.edu. Specializes in mental health issues involving women with cancer, consequences of physical and sexual abuse and depression.

Office for Women's Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Parklawn Building, Room 13-99, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, Md. 20857 ♦ (301) 443-5184, fax (301) 443-8964. Ulonda Shamwell, acting associate administrator, and staff can help find experts on specific issues dealing with women's mental health.

National Institute of Mental Health Office of Scientific Information, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, Md. 20857 ♦ (301) 443-4536, Web site: www.nimh.nih.gov. Ask for the press officer of the day; Marilyn Weeks is the media coordinator. Staff can help find experts on specific issues dealing with women's mental health.

Marcia Byrnes, RN, MPH, director for primary care, women's issues, disease management, Partnership for Behavioral Healthcare/CentraLink, Tiburon, Calif. 94920 ♦ (415) 435-9821, fax (415) 435-9092. CentraLink is a company that identifies innovations in mental health care and educates professionals.

■ WORKPLACE ISSUES AND MENTAL HEALTH

Washington Business Group on Health, 777 N. Capitol St. NE, Washington, D.C. 20002 ♦ (202) 408-9320, fax (202) 408-9332, Web site: www.wbgh.com. Dr. Mary Jane England, president and a psychiatrist; Veronica Goff, director, specializes in mental health.

A nonprofit health policy and research organization supported by the nation's major employers. Has done reports on dealing with clinically depressed workers, privacy issues and how employers can make rea-

sonable accommodations for workers with psychiatric disabilities. Also runs the Mental Health Services Program for Youth.

■ YOUTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

According to an Institute of Medicine Report, at least 7.5 million children, or 12 percent of U.S. youngsters, have a diagnosable mental illness. Only about a third receive treatment.

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 3615 Wisconsin Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20016 ♦ (202) 966-7300 or 800-333-7636, fax (202) 966-2891, Web site: www.aacap.org. Virginia Anthony, executive director; Mary Randolph-Scott, communications, E-mail: mrsccott@aacap.org.

Represents more than 5,700 psychiatrists specializing in children and adolescents; publishes information on research; sponsors committees on various issues; offers fact sheets on such topics as psychiatric medication for children, children who won't go to school, depressed children, step-family problems and children's sleep disorders.

Center for School Mental Health Assistance, University of Maryland, 680 W. Lexington St., 10th Floor, Baltimore, Md., 21201-1570 ♦ (888) 706-0980, fax (410) 706-0984, Web site: <http://csmha.ab.umd.edu>. Mark Weist, Ph.D., director, mweist@umpsy.ab.umd.edu.

Funded by the Office of Adolescent Health, part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, this center offers technical assistance to promote the expansion and improvement of mental health services for children and youth in schools. Has a library with resource materials and produces a newsletter.

National Technical Assistance Center for Children's Mental Health, Georgetown University Child Development Center, 3307 M St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20007-3935 ♦ (202) 687-5000, fax (202) 687-8899, E-mail: gucdc@gunet.georgetown.edu. Sybil Goldman, director.

Offers information packets, issue briefs and monographs on children and adolescents with serious emotional disturbances.

National Resource Network on Child and Family Mental Health Services, Washing-

ton Business Group on Health, 777 N. Capitol St. NE, Washington, D.C. 20002 ♦ (202) 408-9320, fax (202) 408-9332, E-mail: nrn@wbgh.com. Constance Dellmuth, director.

Offers technical assistance in developing family-focused, culturally competent, community-based multi-agency service delivery systems at 29 sites for children with serious emotional disturbances and their families. Focuses on policy issues and legislation in these areas. Funded by the Center for Mental Health Services.

Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, 1021 Prince St., Alexandria, Va. 22314 ♦ (703) 684-7710, fax (703) 836-1040, Web site: www.ffcmh.org, E-mail: ffcmh@crosslink.net. Barbara Huff, executive director.

Parent-run group that focuses on the needs of children and youth with emotional, behavior or mental disorders. Offers information and advocates for prevention, early intervention, family support, education, transition services and other resources needed by children and their families.

Research and Training Center for Children's Mental Health, Department of Child and Family Studies, Florida Mental Health Institute, University of South Florida, 13301 Bruce B. Downs Boulevard, Tampa, Fla. 33612 ♦ (813) 974-4661, fax (813) 974-4406. Robert Friedman, chairman, E-mail: friedman@hal.fmhi.usf.edu; Krista Kutash, deputy director, E-mail: kutash@hal.fmhi.usf.edu; Albert Duchnowski, co-director, E-mail: duchnows@hal.fmhi.usf.edu.

Conducts studies of children with serious emotional disturbances and does service system research; conducts annual conference.

Research and Training Center on Family Support and Children's Mental Health, Regional Research Institute of Portland State University, P. O. Box 751, Portland, Ore. 97207 ♦ (503) 725-4040, fax (503) 725-4180; Barbara Friesen, director, E-mail: frieseb@rri.pdx.edu.

Conducts research and training focused on family support issues, family/professional collaboration and diverse cultural groups.

■ STATISTICS/HISTORY

Center for Mental Health Services National Reporting Program, Department of Health and Human Services, Rockville,

Md. 20857 ♦ Ronald Manderscheid, Ph.D. (301) 443-3343. Collects and reports national statistical information on mental health services and the people who receive them. Collaborates with local, state and national mental health organizations.

Gerald N. Grob, Henry E. Sigerist professor of the history of medicine, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J. 08901-1293 ♦ (732) 932-8377, fax (732) 932-6872, E-mail: ggrob@rci.rutgers.edu. A pre-eminent mental health historian and author of "The Mad Among Us — A History of the Care of America's Mentally Ill," paperback, Harvard University Press, 1995.

■ NEWSLETTERS/JOURNALS

Behavioral Healthcare Tomorrow, 1110 Mar West St., Tiburon, Calif. 94920 ♦ (415) 435-9743, fax 415-435-9879. Adam Richmond is the managing editor; E-mail: arichmond@centralink.com

This bi-monthly magazine is published by CentralLink, a company that tries to identify innovations in the mental health field and educate professionals about them. The magazine covers managed behavioral care, research about treatment of mental disorders, patient privacy, child health issues, treatment outcomes, and the report-card movement for evaluating behavioral managed care.

Harvard Mental Health Letter, 164 Longwood Ave., Boston, Mass. 02115 ♦ (617) 432-1485. Dr. Lester Grinspoon, editor. Web site: www.med.harvard.edu/publications/Health_Publications. A monthly, this newsletter is heavily oriented toward academics or mental health practitioners, but it can be useful. Published by the Harvard Medical School Publications Group.

Health Care Policy Report, Bureau of National Affairs, 1231 25th St., NW, Washington D.C. 20037 ♦ (202) 452-4200, fax (202) 331-5102. David Nather reports on mental health in his coverage of Medicaid and children's health.

This is a weekly publication aimed at professionals, congressional staff members, health-association lobbyists and lawyers.

Mental Health Weekly, 208 Governor St., Providence, R.I. 02906 ♦ (401) 831-6020, fax (401) 861-6370, Web site: www.manisses.com. Gary Enos, editor. A

RESOURCE GUIDE

weekly newsletter owned by Manisses Communications Group devoted mostly to policy issues for mental health administrators, from managed care companies to community mental health providers.

Mind/Body Health Newsletter, published quarterly by the Center for Health Sciences, part of the Institute for the Study of Human Knowledge, P. O. Box 176, Los Altos, Calif. 94023 ♦ (650) 948-9428, fax (650) 948-2687. Edited by David Sobel, M.D., and Robert Ornstein, Ph.D. Published by a nonprofit group, this newsletter focuses on the psychological aspects of health. Offers continuing-education programs recognized by the American Psychological Association.

■ BOOKS

"Mental Health, United States," 1996, edited by Ronald W. Manderscheid, Ph.D., and Mary Anne Sonnenschein, published every two years by the Center for Mental Health Services.

A must-have reference for every reporter who covers health care. Includes chapters on behavioral managed care, mental health epidemiological data on adults and children, information on mental health in Medicaid programs, mental health services in rural areas and data on mental health providers. For a free copy, call (800) 789-2647.

"Criminalizing the Seriously Mentally Ill: The Abuse of Jails as Mental Hospitals," a joint report of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill and the Public Interest Research Group, 1992. For a copy, send \$10 to Public Citizen's Publications Dept., 2000 P Street NW, Suite 605, Washington, D.C. 20036.

"The Mad Among Us: A History of the Care of America's Mentally Ill" by Gerald N. Grob, professor of the history of medicine at Rutgers University, Harvard University Press (paperback), 1995.

"Media Madness: Public Images of Mental Illness," by Dr. Otto Wahl, Rutgers University Press, 1995. Examines the prevalence, nature and impact of media portrayals of mental illnesses.

"Quick Reference to the Diagnostic Criteria from DSM-IV," published by the Ameri-

can Psychiatric Association. Contains descriptions of all mental illnesses recognized by the official coding system in the United States. A handy book to have if you write about particular mental illnesses.

"When Someone You Love Has A Mental Illness: A Handbook for Family, Friends and Caregivers," by Rebecca Woolis, Jeremy Tarcher/Putnam Books, 1992.

"Caring for the Mind: The Comprehensive Guide to Mental Health" by Dianne Hales and Robert Hales, M.D. (Bantam Trade Paperback) 1996. An excellent resource for any journalist who covers health. This book is easy to read, loaded with information that can be quickly assimilated. Also includes commonly asked questions and the answers.

■ KEY WEB SITES

American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law is the medical society home page that lists relevant Supreme Court cases. Web site: <http://www.emory.edu/AAPL>.

American Psychiatric Press, Inc. features the online catalog for this publishing house. Also includes the site for the *American Journal of Psychiatry*, *Psychiatric Services* and *Psychiatric News*. Web site: www.appi.org.

BehaveNet offers directories of academic centers, advocacy organizations, boards of examiners, law, forensic examiners, providers, treatment guidelines, and mental health laws of some states. Web site: www.behavenet.com.

Depression Central is a clearinghouse for information on depression and mood disorders for lay and professional audiences. Web site: www.psycom.net/depression.central.html.

Dr. Grohol's Psychology Web Pointer, a 30-page list of World Wide Web pages associated with mental health, psychology or support services on the Internet. Web site: www.coil.com/~grohol.

Internet Mental Health offers information about medications, disorders, organizations, journals and newspapers, articles and an online magazine. Web site: www.mentalhealth.com

Mental Health Net bills itself as the largest guide to mental health resources online on such disorders as depression, anxiety and panic attacks and on professional resources in psychology, psychiatry, and social work. Also has journals and self-help magazines. Sponsored by CMHC Services, a Dublin, Ohio, company that specializes in mental health information. Web site: www.cmhc.com.

National Institute of Mental Health contains information about programs and clinical updates. Web site: www.nimh.nih.gov.

National Mental Health Services Knowledge Exchange Network is run by the Center for Mental Health Services, a part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The network provides links and referrals to consumer and family advocacy organizations, federal, state and local mental health agencies, mental health organizations, national clearinghouses and technical assistance centers operated by the Center for Mental Health Services. ♦ (800) 789-2647, fax (301) 984-8796, Web site: www.mentalhealth.org, E-mail: ken@mentalhealth.org.

Psychiatric Times from Mental Health InfoSource offers late-breaking news and abstracts that cover current research in mental illness or issues in the mental health field. Web site: www.mhsource.com/psychiatrictimes.html.

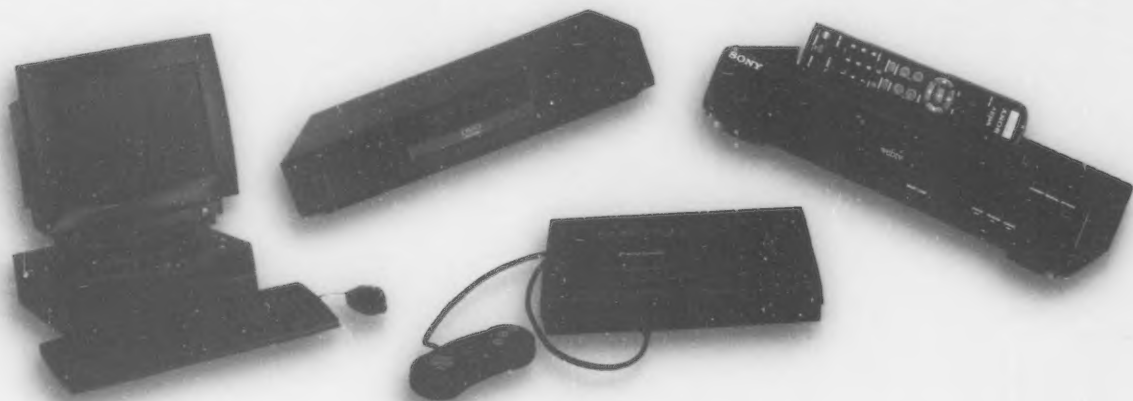
Psychiatry On-Line News, Articles and Archives has peer-reviewed articles, cases, debates, editorials and archived information on such topics as affective disorders and applied psychology. Web site: www.priory.co.uk/journals/psych.htm.

Psychnews International is a monthly electronic publication devoted to issues in psychology, psychiatry and the social sciences. Web site: www.mhnet.org/pni.

Schizophrenia and Mental Health Resources of Interest on the Internet is run by the Department of Psychiatry at Yale University School of Medicine. An excellent resource guide to whatever you want to find out about this particular mental disorder. Listings make it easy to find a center near you for resources. Web site: www.yale.edu/vayale ■

GIMME!

FREEBIES FOR NEWSFOLK IN THE WORLD OF HIGH-TECH



BY TRUDY LIEBERMAN

Iomega, a maker of computer disks and drives based in Roy, Utah, held a party last summer in Manhattan for some sixty of its favorite friends — including thirty-five journalists who write about consumer electronics. The purpose was to introduce Buz, a hardware/software package that lets you edit home movies on your personal computer, inserting sounds, pictures, and special effects.

The invitation promised every guest “a free Buz of your very own” and noted — not so discreetly — that Buz is “a \$199 value.” Over cocktails and hors d’oeuvres, Iomega officials showed reporters from “life style” and “industry” publica-

High-tech goodies such as these — Compaq computer (left), Toshiba video player (top middle), Sony WebTV unit (right), and Panasonic video-game system — often find long-term homes with editors and reporters who review them. Some p.r. agents for electronics makers seek good publicity as a tradeoff. Yet with more expensive equipment, many companies have stepped up efforts to get journalists to return the stuff.

tions how Buz works. Most of them signed up for the freebie. Iomega was hoping for Christmas reviews but, alas, Buz hit a technical snag and wasn’t ready. By fall, journalists were calling, wanting to know where their Buz was.

Freebies for reporters and editors, at least some of them, are not unusual in the multibillion-dollar high-tech business. According to one p.r. official whose clients include major electronics firms and who regularly deals with the press: “Products are the agreed-upon perk. It’s the exception rather than the rule not to expect and accept freebies.” Too many reporters, says a veteran consumer journalist, have come to expect such gifts, and are “more than happy to take them.”

A culture of expectation infects high-tech reporting these days: some journalists have their hands out for goodies, some manufacturers want to buy favorable pub-

licity, and some media organizations, which need the products to review, appear to tacitly approve such dealings. The public, which looks to the press for unbiased help finding its way through the complexities of computers and electronics, is none the wiser. “There’s a symbiotic, parasitic relationship here,” says an executive with a p.r. firm. “It’s getting worse and more insidious.”

Consider “push-back.” Iomega was happy to give Buz away with no return necessary; the possibility of thirty-five journalists mentioning Buz in their stories made the cost of the freebie a bargain. But with more expensive items, industry protocol dictates that reporters and editors return the products once they are done with them. Manufacturers want journalists to touch their products, play with them, and, of course, mention them favorably. They also want them back. The goods, howev-

Trudy Lieberman is a contributing editor for CJR and health policy editor at Consumer Reports. (This article reflects her conclusions, not those of Consumer Reports.)

ETHICS

er, are not always returned. In a perverse twist on journalistic ethics, makers of big-ticket high-tech items, such as camcorders, large screen TVs, speaker systems, and computers are beginning to wrestle with reporters for the return of the products and to question the ethics of the people they've tried so hard to court.

"Push-back" is industry jargon for the pointed refusal by a journalist to return a product, and it is on the rise, prompting some manufacturers to toughen their return policies. Sony asks some reporters for their credit card numbers to bill them in case the product doesn't show up. More companies, such as Toshiba and Sharp, require formal written loan agreements. "Virtually every manufacturer now makes you sign a loan agreement," explains freelancer Dennis Barker. "You used to just go to a product person and say 'I need model xyz,' and the time was unspecified. Now with loan agreements, the time you can keep it is pretty specific, usually thirty days."

Says Martha Whiteley, public relations manager at Panasonic, "It's kind of flattering when someone really wants to hang onto your products. But it's a question of ethics." A few years back when Panasonic introduced the \$500 3DO multi-player video game system, some 350 were sent to journalist/reviewers. Panasonic expected them back and made efforts to retrieve them, but more than 100 units never came home, according to the p.r. agency that was responsible for them.

Cindy Mouracade, product loan manager at Shandwick USA, which handles p.r. for Sharp Electronics and sends out twenty-five to thirty electronics products a month, says getting them back from an editor can be "quite difficult," at times requiring several phone calls. Sometimes even that doesn't work.

Linda Lentz, articles editor for *Home* magazine, a Hachette Filipacchi publication, is quite candid about which high-tech items she returns: "After a while things lose their value or importance, and I don't want them. If it's expensive, and I can't use it, I send it back. But for PCs, we hang onto them if they are valuable." Lentz says she's "not as good at keeping stuff as other people." But she's pretty good. Her current inventory includes:

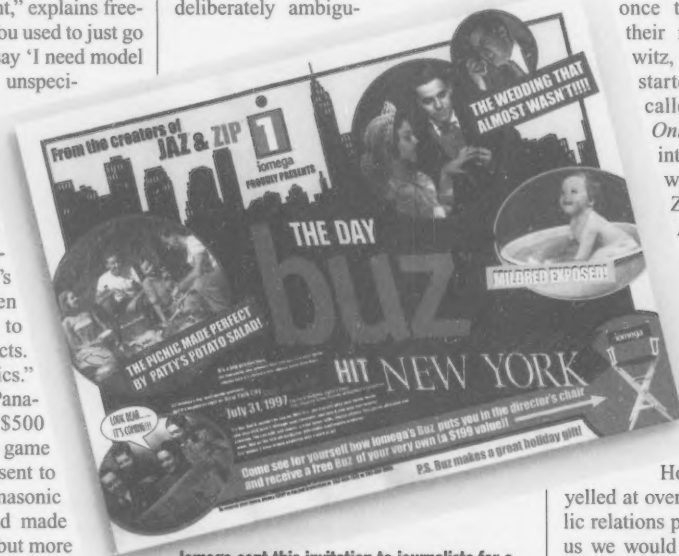
- A Compaq computer the company gave

her more than a year ago that she uses to test software. Compaq asked for the computer back, but Lentz requested an extension: "It's in my home and my daughter is using it for schoolwork." Lentz says she will keep it another couple of months.

- A computer supplied by Intel for her office so she could try out a video phone. "They don't want it back right now," Lentz says.

- A Toshiba VCR that she photographed and wrote about. This, Lentz says, she's tried to return. "They said 'we know you have it. Hold onto it for a little longer.' I had already used it in the magazine, so they weren't bribing me."

A manufacturer's intentions about the return of a product are often deliberately ambiguous.



Omega sent this invitation to journalists for a party introducing Buzz — its new \$199 hardware/software package that lets consumers edit their home movies on a computer. The party favor was "a free Buzz of your very own."

ous. One technology writer for a major business magazine says that early last year a p.r. firm promoting 3Com's \$249 PalmPilot electronic organizer sent him the product to review. He did not review it, but liked it well enough to inquire about buying it. "I asked where to send the check, and they said 'we'll get to that later.' The message was you can pay for it or not pay for it. The conversation was intentionally murky to give me leeway to drive it one way or the other." After two months his PalmPilot broke, and the writer returned it, making the question of payment moot.

Some high-tech manufacturers are willing to forget about "lost" equipment if they detect a publicity payoff down the road. Howard Blumenthal, who writes a

syndicated newspaper column called *Hi-Tech Home*, puts it this way: "Most of the time you send it back, but sometimes the marketing firm or p.r. firm will suggest that the product become a permanent part of your reference system. They know they will get additional space in other articles in the future." Dennis Barker, the freelancer, is blunt: "Companies may have favorites who may have a product longer because that editor has given them more ink."

Therein lies the danger: a gift or loan that becomes permanent is not so free after all. It's a rope tethering reporter to donor, which can unravel when the manufacturer doesn't get what it wants.

"They stop sending the products once the reviews stop meeting their needs," says Jeremy Horwitz, a twenty-two-year-old who started an online magazine called *Intelligent Gamer Online*. (The magazine turned into a print publication and was eventually bought by Ziff-Davis. It later became *Intelligent Gamer*, which is no longer published.) In 1996, when Sony was about to launch the video game *Crash Bandicoot*, *Intelligent Gamer* pointed out some of its shortcomings. "We received telephone calls from Sony," says

Horwitz. "I personally was yelled at over the phone by [a Sony public relations person] who made it clear to us we would not be receiving copies of *Crash*, and potentially other Sony products, because Sony didn't understand what we were trying to do with our reviews."

Nowhere is the implicit pact between journalist and manufacturer clearer than in the familiarization trips, or "fam trips," which are thriving in the world of high-tech. An electronics maker might whine about a missing \$500 VCR, then pay thousands of dollars to send a reporter to Tokyo or Seoul to visit factories and view new products. This fall, for example, Sharp took nine journalists to Japan for nine days to see its offerings. Manufacturers generally provide plane tickets, hotels, and meals; journalists pay their own way for days off and incidentals.

Some trips are to faraway places; others are to less exotic locations like Indianapolis, the headquarters of Thomson Consumer Electronics. When Thomson introduces its more pedestrian models of RCA color TVs, VCRs, and DVD players, it brings journalists to Indianapolis.

October 23, 1997

John Briesch

Cindy Pollard

Rick Clancy

Re: Relationship with Andy Pargh

We, too, were disappointed to see Mavi article—because we were told last week Andy's office, *USA Today* made the edit change.

respect to our relationship, either

When it wants to showcase its premier PROSCAN line of TVs and other products, it flies reporters to Fort Myers, Florida, a setting that more accurately reflects the upscale PROSCAN products, according to James Harper, manager of news and information. "Most publications do accept the trips," he says. "Generally one or two" want to pay their own way. Harper says, for example, that *HFN* (*Home Furnishings News*), a trade weekly, and some daily newspapers, when they attend, cover their own bills.

Do fam trips color journalists' perceptions of the products they review? Trip takers emphatically say "no," maintaining that factory visits and line showings are necessary to do their jobs. Steve Kent, who writes the CyberPlay high-tech column for the Los Angeles Times syndicate, says that "the only way for small magazines to compete is to go on these junkets. Otherwise, you'll never get an interview with these executives. You'll never see the product under development." Kent says he advises editors when a story results from a fam trip. For that reason, *The Seattle Times* recently declined such a piece.

Rebecca Day, a free-lancer who writes a technology column for *Rolling Stone*, goes on several trips a year. "Any time you get a phone call or spend any time with a company, they expect something in return," she says. "You use your own judgment. I feel an obligation to the readers [to tell them] if it's a good product. More often than not, the manufacturers don't bring out bad products."

If these trips are so useful for reporters, why don't more publications pay for them? The answer, of course, is money.

Walter Mossberg, *The Wall Street Journal's* personal technology columnist, declines trips paid for by manufacturers. And he's suspicious of the manufacturers that offer them: "It makes me think that their products are crappy if they have to

PERCEIVED NEUTRALITY WHAT SONY EXPECTS FROM ANDY PARGH

Occasionally a manufacturer goes beyond freebies and product loans to bond with a journalist. The case of Andy Pargh, who the *Today* show calls "our Gadget Guru," stands out. Pargh offers consumer advice and commentary (mostly of the look-what-we-have-for-you-now variety) on all kinds of products, including computers and consumer electronics, on *Today's* weekday and weekend shows. He also writes a syndicated column for 120 papers.

In addition, Pargh moonlights for Sony. In a September 23 internal memo obtained by *CJR*, one Sony executive explains to another, "Our basic agreement with Andy simply covers the development and production of four brochures for \$80K—targeted at simplifying complicated technology and products for consumers, but stopping short of endorsing Sony."

One such brochure, called "The Gadget Guru's Guide to DVD" and bearing Pargh's byline, features tips on choosing digital video disk players and questions and answers about the systems. On the back page, in the same typeface but on white background instead of dark, comes a pitch for Sony models 3000 and 7000. The brochure explains why Sony DVD players produce "Better Sound," "Better Special Effects," and "Better Connections." A reader would have no clear idea of where Pargh's explanations end and Sony's pitch begins.

In the September 23 internal memo, Cindy Pollard, director of corporate communications for Sony Electronics, explains to John Briesch, president, consumer products, Sony Electronics, why a reference to a Sony digital camera had been edited out of a Pargh story in *USA Today* that had appeared the previous day. She notes that "Andy's office" said that *USA Today* had made the edits for space, and "did not advise Andy of the change."

Pollard goes on to say that the company must be prepared for such disappointments because of "editorial decisions made by the publications" or because Pargh "zealously guards his 'journalistic integrity.' In fact, it is his perceived 'neutrality' that makes him valuable to us as a third-party endorser." She mentions that Sony is exploring the possibility of Pargh

producing "closed-loop videos for in-store explanation of products."

The most revealing aspect of the memo, however, is that it opens a window on what the money relationship with Pargh means to Sony:

"We are hopeful that this business relationship . . . gives us a 'leg up' in getting him to cover our topics on the

Today show, in *USA Today* and in other information channels. But the fact is, he's not our 'hired gun'—and we will not always get exactly what we want. On the other hand, I believe we're much more likely to see fair and even-handed coverage from him than previously. I can assure

you, though, that we're working as diligently as we can to influence him to position Sony and its products prominently, properly and pervasively."

David McCormick, executive producer for broadcast standards at NBC News, says the network's policy is that employees and free-lancers "should not be maintaining outside business or financial interests that might interfere with their news judgments."

In an interview with *CJR* before the magazine learned of Sony's payments to him, Pargh volunteered, "We do not accept any monies. Our journalism is journalism. We have our opinions." When asked later if Sony had paid him \$80,000, as the internal memo shows, he said, "No way. If they did, it's something I don't know about." Then he said his agent "put that together, not me. He did the deal. I just wrote copy. They came to me and said 'would you write about DVD, nonslanted?' And that's what I wrote. I didn't reference it [the Sony model] in the copy." He says he "wasn't thrilled" when he saw Sony's name on the brochure. "I do not write advertorials."

On November 29, on the Saturday *Today* show, Pargh reviewed DVD units. What did he recommend? He mentioned models by Pioneer and RCA, but "The one that I picked for the best of the year," he told *Today* co-host Jack Ford, "is from Sony. It's their model 7000. This thing is about \$1,000, but has every bell and whistle that you'll need."



On the *Today* show, Andy Pargh recommended a Sony 7000.

ETHICS

pay people to see them." But few publications have the financial resources of Mossberg's *Wall Street Journal*.

Are higher ethical standards, then, the province of only the richer media organizations? Outlets like *Fortune*, *The Wall Street Journal*, CBS, and NBC have rules about freebies. Peter Petre, the executive editor of *Fortune* who edits the magazine's technology section, says, "Time Inc.'s policy is very clear and very explicit about not accepting free merchandise." CBS's rules even address the issue of press discounts, which its employees cannot accept unless those discounts are available to the general public. Other media organizations don't seem to worry about press discounts, which usually let journalists buy at the wholesale price. According to Howard Geltzer, who heads his own New York City p.r. firm, which counts several consumer-electronics manufacturers as clients: "More than occasionally journalists do avail themselves of this accommodation on an ongoing basis." Does a press discount count as a freebie?

Codes of ethics for professional journalism organizations, and even the codes of conduct for many media outlets themselves, can be vague. The code of ethics

for the Radio-Television News Directors Association, (RTNDA) simply says that members "will decline gifts or favors which would influence or appear to influence their judgments." The code for the Society of Professional Journalists says that journalists should "refuse gifts, favors, fees, free travel, and special treatment . . . if they compromise journalistic integrity." What happens when reporters say a free trip to Tokyo doesn't compro-

ARE HIGHER ETHICAL STANDARDS THE PROVINCE OF ONLY THE RICHER MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS?

mise their integrity? Who's to say it does?

Some publications are not much help to either journalists or manufacturers in delineating the ethics of freebies, because they have no policies or fail to enforce them. If all publications operated like *The Wall Street Journal*, says a p.r. executive who is fed up with the way things now work, these murky quid pro quos would

disappear. *Rolling Stone*, hardly a struggling magazine, has no policy per se, says assistant managing editor Mark Woodruff. When one of his writers asked if he could go to Japan to see some new technology, Woodruff told him that was his business as long as he didn't make any promises that he'd write about it. And when free products accumulate at the magazine, Woodruff says, they're piled in a special area with a sign that says "free stuff," and the staff can help themselves.

Frank Lalli, president of the American Society of Magazine Editors, says that there may be "more of this gift business" at service magazines than at hard news magazines. Indeed, explains an editor for one of Hearst's many service publications, who goes on three or four sponsored trips a year, "there are no rules here. It's all about your own personal way of doing things."

Some newspapers have strict standards, dating from the days when auto, travel, and food writers were courted lavishly by the outfits they covered, and newspapers tried to put a stop to it. The *Chicago Tribune* has one of the toughest freebie policies. Staffers can accept nothing that costs more than a simple keychain. "You need to keep reinforcing the policy or people lapse," says *Tribune* associate editor Joe Leonard. He

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recalls that when goods arrived at the *Trib*, he used to send a polite letter to the p.r. firm and then donate the stuff to charity. Now, he says, the letter of refusal is less polite and also goes to the top management of the company that's paying for the freebie.

If a keychain is the standard at the *Tribune*, what is it at other publications? Some specify \$25 or \$50; at others, ambivalence again prevails. NBC says reporters can keep a freebie of nominal value, but doesn't define nominal. The code of conduct at Ziff-Davis, the big publisher of computer magazines, says gifts and entertainment "may be accepted by employees of the Company or its divisions when they . . . are so limited in value (i.e., of token value) that they could not be construed as an attempt to buy the recipient's favor or influence the recipient's conduct."

Drawing lines can be tricky. When does it become too difficult and not worth the effort to return something? Last summer Mary Woodworth, a Los Angeles public relations executive who pitches low-end electronic toys, sent a box of plastic soccer figures, worth about \$50, to some 150 newspapers. Only four or five returned them. And what about the stacks of software that companies send unsolicited to entice reporters into trying their

products and writing about them? Explains Claire LaBeaux, a public relations manager for Broderbund Software: "In order to get a story about software, the person has to use it."

Should a journalist keep software that costs \$55 but not software that costs \$400? Most reporters interviewed for this story say they keep it no matter the price. Manufacturers don't expect it back, they say, since the incremental cost of producing it in quantity is small. Even publications that have rules outlawing freebies say software is an exception — more akin to books that publishers send for review than to trips to the Orient. But is software, especially the expensive kind, the same as a \$30 book? *The Wall Street Journal* says "no," requiring that any software priced at more than \$100 be returned or given to charity.

What about free-lancers, who account for so much of what is written about high technology these days? Do the rules for staffers apply to them? If so, can they be enforced? The case of Rich Warren, a free-lancer who has written about consumer electronics for the *Chicago Tribune*, illustrates the problem.

Last February Warren produced a piece about Sony's \$300 WebTV unit that, "as if

by divine messenger," he wrote, "landed on my doorstep." Warren found it worked so well, he told his readers that he shipped it off to his mother in California who uses it on her "twenty-seven-inch Mitsubishi TV" to send e-mail to her son. "If my mom can operate WebTV, anyone can," he wrote. A few months before that, Warren wrote about two men showing up at his door with "mammoth cartons of loud-speakers." He said they were employees from Polk Audio who spent hours installing, positioning, and tweaking a \$9,000, top-of-the-line home theater speaker system. Warren used the word "awesome" to describe the system, adding that "awesome" is a word "I rarely use."

He didn't tell his readers whether the system became a permanent resident in his home, and we couldn't ask him since he refused to talk to *CJR*.

"My button was pushed in the late eighties" about Warren, says Joe Leonard, the *Tribune's* associate editor. "It was obvious he was keeping this stuff. I don't have any way of policing him. He's a big gorilla, and there's nothing I can do about it." The *Tribune* revamped its "Friday" section several months ago, and Warren's column no longer appears, although he still occasionally contributes to the paper. ♦

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HOT ON THE MONEY TRAIL

Latin American journalists are flexing new muscle, exposing scandal, probing corruption, even toppling presidents

BY JOEL SIMON

Gustavo Gorriti made his name as an investigative journalist in his native Peru by unmasking killers. In the region where death squads began, he hiked into the highlands, avoiding military patrols to report on incidents like the 1986 Parcco massacre, in which the Peruvian military slaughtered about twenty peasants. Gorriti's reporting identified those responsible and exposed a cover-up that reached into the army high command.

Ten years later Latin America has changed and so has Gorriti. He is more likely to spend his time now poring over bank records. It is not that Gorriti has lost his taste for investigative reporting or his penchant for adventure — at 49, the judo black belt and six-time national champion of Peru is still in fighting shape. But if you're looking for the dark underbelly of Latin America you're more likely to find stories by following a money trail than a jungle trail.

On a continent where military juntas have been replaced by elected leaders; where most of the once-chronic civil wars have ended; and where once-closed economies have swung open to foreign investment and trade, journalists are

Joel Simon is the Americas program coordinator at the Committee to Protect Journalists.

beginning to probe the relationship between money and power. The growth of investigative journalism in Latin America is due in part to the simple fact that governments have become less repressive.

In Panama, reporter Gustavo Gorriti (below) found links between President Ernesto Pérez Balladares and Colombian drug traffickers who'd contributed to his election campaign



But journalists are also benefiting from an information explosion fueled by the opening of stock exchanges and the increasing availability of government economic statistics. They are cultivating new sources in the private sector and in government regulatory agencies. And they are forging relationships with prosecutors and members of congressional commissions who are investigating corruption in many countries.

Armed with this new information, investigative journalists have uncovered kickback schemes, money laundering, and influence peddling throughout Latin America. In fact, the presidents of both Brazil and Venezuela were brought down by reporting on government corruption. "As soon as you know where the money is and how it's moving, it's much easier to do investigative journalism," says Edward Schumacher, managing editor of *The Wall Street Journal Americas*, the edition of the paper published as an insert in twenty newspapers throughout Latin America.

Gorriti settled in Panama in 1996, four years after a commando unit armed with silenced weapons broke into his Lima home and secretly hauled him away to the army's Intelligence Service compound. That was April 5, 1992, the night president Alberto Fujimori dissolved congress and the Supreme Court and took full control of Peru. Gorriti was held for thirty-six hours and believes that he would have "disappeared" if word of

AP WIDEWORLD/SCOTT DUTTON

his detention had not gotten out to international press organizations.

It didn't take Gorriti long after assuming his job as an editor at the daily *La Prensa* to discover that he didn't even have to get his boots muddy to unearth a link between Panama's president Ernesto Pérez Balladares and the Cali drug cartel. Gorriti had moved to Panama at the invitation of *La Prensa's* publisher Juan Arias. He soon began following a lead given to him by a Cuban friend in Miami. In January 1996, the Panamanian Agro-Industrial Bank (Banaico) had collapsed. By cultivating sources among angry depositors, Panamanian Banking Commission members, Panamanian investigators, and U.S. law enforcement agencies, Gorriti and his team of *La Prensa* reporters discovered that the bank had been used by Colombian drug traffickers — with close ties to the Panamanian government — to launder profits from the narcotics trade. He also found that a major Colombian trafficker who was using the bank to launder money made a \$51,000 contribution to Pérez Balladares's campaign fund.

The president at first denied the *La Prensa* allegations, but later admitted they were true. Nevertheless, angered by Gorriti's reporting, the Panamanian government denied his request to renew his work visa and ordered him to leave the country by last August 28. It took an international campaign on Gorriti's behalf to force the government to back down. "When I was working in Peru, financial reporting was done by boring specialists," Gorriti said recently, in his ocean-front Panama City apartment after receiving word that he would be allowed to stay on. "It was only later that I understood its crucial importance."

In fact, financial scandal has replaced civil unrest as the leading story in Latin America. The examples are legion. In Mexico financier Jorge Lankenau is the latest tycoon to be accused of fraud in a widening banking crisis. He made headlines in November when he escaped house arrest by crawling from an underground tunnel connected to his mansion in the northern industrial city of Monterrey. *El Norte*, Monterrey's leading daily, printed a series of stories chronicling how he moved funds from the Cayman Islands and Uruguay to shore up his crumbling banking empire.

In Brazil, mired in its own banking crisis, stories about new influence peddling schemes occur virtually every week. When Congressman João Alves was questioned a few years ago by a TV reporter about how he made deposits of over \$50



SEVEN COUNTRIES: A SCORECARD

All over Latin America, journalists (their photos on the left in each of these pairings) have been conducting tough investigations — often in life-threatening circumstances — into the malfeasances of high government officials. Pictured to the right, in each case, are leaders who've felt the lash of those newsmen's reports.

million while earning a congressman's salary he claimed that he had won the lottery twenty-four thousand times.

In Colombia, two ministers were forced to resign last summer after the weekly newsmagazine *Semana* published the transcript from a surreptitiously recorded cellular phone conversation in which they discussed President Ernesto Samper's plan to give half of the government's radio concessions to his friends. (See box, page 55.)

In Chile, which boasts the region's most vibrant economy, investors were furious to learn that a Spanish firm that had formed a joint venture with the Chilean electric company had used inside information to bilk investors.

In Ecuador, articles published in the daily *Hoy* contributed to the downfall of a president who called himself "The Madman." An investigative story coordinated by editor Diego Cornejo showed how

President Abdalá Bucaram had diverted money he had raised during a Christmas telethon to help the poor.

Even the tiny Caribbean island nation of Antigua and Barbuda got in on the act when the opposition newspaper reported that President Lester Bird had accepted a \$1 million bribe from the Cali drug cartel to allow his country to be used as a transshipment point for drugs headed to the United States.

The press has played an important role in reporting every one of the recent scandals, often breaking the story either through its own investigations or government leaks. The new style of reporting was born in Brazil in 1992 when the press began to probe corruption allegations made during impeachment proceedings against President Fernando Collor de Mello. After running a media-savvy campaign under an anti-corruption banner, Collor — whose hobbies include karate

MAP: MOFFETT CECIL; PHOTOS: GORITTI/ GANMA/JORDAN; SAMPER: AP/WIDEWORLD; FERNANDO COLLOR: GANMA/JOHN HASTED; BALLADARES: AP/WIDEWORLD; NICHEL IPICHITZ, DE MELLO: GANMA/MARKEL; BUCARAM: AP/WIDEWORLD; LOPEZ, MENEM: AP/WIDEWORLD; DANIEL NUZIO

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(a black belt) and who has flown in a jet plane that broke the sound barrier — was named by *People* magazine as one of the world's fifty most beautiful people. But Rosental Alves, then executive editor of daily *Jornal do Brasil*, was not seduced. *Jornal* reporter Mario Rosa in early 1991 uncovered the first evidence of the deep cynicism behind Collor's promise of clean government. Using a computer access code provided by a sympathetic senator, Rosa perused the files of the Brazilian Finance Ministry. He found that money distributed to the president's wife Rosane and earmarked for charity had gone to her relatives and family in her home town. (Not that Rosane was reluctant to spend money on herself: during an official visit to Rome she traveled in an eight-car motorcade, dropping \$15,000 on designer clothing in a few hours.)

A few months later the president's younger brother Pedro gave an explosive interview to *Veja*, Brazil's leading news weekly. After months of cultivating Pedro as a possible source, the magazine finally persuaded him to come forward with his accusation. Paulo Farias, the president's campaign treasurer, ran a multimillion-dollar influence-peddling ring on behalf of the president. In response to that interview, the Brazilian Congress formed a commission to investigate the charges. Eventually, Collor was forced to resign.

During the investigation, Brazil's feisty press, held in check until 1985 by twenty-one years of military rule, reported aggressively on the scandal. *IstoE*, a weekly, published an investigative story based on bank records and interviews with Farias's chauffeur. *Veja* ran photographs of the lavish gardens at Collor's privately-owned residence in the capital of Brasilia. Bit by bit, a complete picture of the corruption scheme emerged in the press. Claiming to represent Collor, Farias visited virtually every major company in Brazil and extracted bribes in exchange for favorable treatment from the government. According to published documents that included bank records, canceled checks, and telephone records that showed he was in daily contact with the president, Farias managed to extort \$55.3 million, more than \$8 million of which was paid directly to Collor. Farias wrote checks for the president's household expenses including the renovation of several houses in Brazil and the purchase of an apartment in Paris. Through its aggressive coverage, the press in Brazil gained both power and credibility.

Since the downfall of Collor, investigative reporting on corruption has

become a mainstay of political coverage in Brazil. The reporting on Collor's corruption was "a typical follow-the-money story," says Alves, now a journalism professor at the University of Texas at Austin. "Often the press was out in front of the congressional investigation."

Only six months later, Carlos Andrés Pérez, the septuagenarian president of Venezuela, found himself enmeshed in a similar scandal. Pérez was first elected president in the 1970s during the country's oil boom. Most Venezuelans seemed to ignore rumors of corruption during his first administration, when petrodollars were flowing in faster than they could be spent.

But with Pérez presiding over a massive devaluation and a painful period of economic austerity, he soon found that Venezuelans were holding him to a different standard. José Vicente Rangel, a former congressman and presidential candidate who had re-cast himself as an investigative journalist for the Caracas daily *El Universal*, published the story that led to Pérez's downfall. Relying on confidential

sources, Rangel reported that Pérez had misappropriated \$17 million in discretionary funds. (The money had disappeared and was unaccounted for.) Later, using documents leaked from the Central Bank and the Foreign Ministry, Rangel alleged that Pérez and two aides had made millions by changing Venezuelan currency into dollars just ahead of the devaluation. Pérez denied the accusation, and the evidence produced against him was never as compelling as the money trail left by Collor. Congress nevertheless began impeachment proceedings. Eventually, like Collor, Pérez was forced to step down.

Because journalists are exposing corruption, polls in the last few years throughout Latin America show that the press is the institution that inspires the greatest degree of public confidence — neck and neck with the Catholic Church. But rather than taking pride in this, Rangel — like many journalists in Latin America — is alarmed. "It worries me because it suggests that other institutions that regulate power in a democracy are not functioning," he says. "The press has become the investigator, the prosecutor, and the judge in order to fill the power vacuum. That's a very dangerous role for the press to play."

Yet it is a role the Latin American press has assumed with a vengeance. In Argentina the press has implicated President Carlos Menem in countless financial scandals. Using confidential sources and leaked financial documents such as bank records, Horacio Verbitsky, columnist for the daily *Página/12*, has crusaded against Menem. The paper has published stories about how the president's brother-in-law tried to shake down an American company to import machinery into Argentina. His reporting also showed how Argentina's National Bank made a \$75 million loan at preferential interest rates to companies owned by Menem's family.

Some of the most damaging reports, published in the weekly *Noticias*, have linked Menem with businessman Alfredo Yabrán — a man whom the president's former finance minister, Domingo Cavallo (who was recently elected to Congress) described as the "head of the Mafia." In March 1996, *Noticias* published one of the first photographs of the notoriously reclusive tycoon, who controls much of Argentina's private mail delivery services and has grown extraordinarily wealthy on government contracts. Ten months after the photograph was published, the man who had taken it was found dead. The charred and handcuffed body of José Luis



Blancornelas

EDITOR SHOT IN MEXICO

As the editor of Mexico's most important investigative newspaper,

Jésus Blancornelas knew he was a marked man. For nearly two decades, the Tijuana newsweekly *Zeta* has published detailed accounts of drug trafficking and corruption. In 1988, co-founder Héctor Félix was murdered. Earlier this year a former accountant and a former lawyer were gunned down (see *CJR* May/June 1997).

On November 21, *Zeta* published a story on a professional assassin named C.H., the top gunman for the vicious Tijuana drug cartel. On Thanksgiving morning, two cars intercepted the Ford Explorer in which Blancornelas was riding and opened fire with automatic weapons. Blancornelas was hit four times but survived. His bodyguard was killed. One of the gunmen was hit in the crossfire and died slumped over his weapon on a Tijuana street corner. He was later identified as David Barrón Corona — better known as C.H.

—J.S.

Cabezas was found in his car in January 1997. A former police officer with close ties to Yabrán has been arrested for masterminding the killing. Menem originally denied that his administration had had any dealings with Yabrán, but newspapers reported that investigators had traced dozens of phone calls from Yabrán to Justice Minister Elías Jassán just after the murder. Menem backtracked and acknowledged his personal friendship with Yabrán, while Jassán was forced to resign.

For Verbitsky, the rise of investigative journalism in Argentina has more to do with the demise of authoritarian controls than with the explosion in information. "There was no lack of information under the dictatorship," which lasted until 1983, he argues. "What was lacking was the possibility of publishing that information or surviving if you did."

But other news people, like *The Miami Herald* Latin America correspondent Andres Oppenheimer, see a clear correlation between the opening of the region's economy and the increased reporting on scandal and corruption. "In Latin America today you have different economic groups competing with each other for power," argues Oppenheimer. "There's now more of a fragmentation. Not enough to create a full democratic opening, but there are more players, and that widens the array of possible sources. Where there is a winner there might be three losers who are willing to talk."

In Argentina — as well as Brazil and Mexico — financial newspapers were the first to break the information bottleneck, printing critical stories about policies that directly affected the powerful business community. Today, every major paper in Latin America has a business section. With the opening of stock exchanges, better reporting from central banks and government agencies, and the influx of professional financial analysts, the amount of basic financial information has increased dramatically in Latin America. International investors who have poured billions of dollars into stock markets from Argentina to Mexico are also demanding timely, accurate information about events that could affect their bottom line. *The Wall Street Journal* has eight full-time reporters covering Latin America, and with the launching of its U.S. edition, the *Financial Times* is also increasing its newshole for Latin American coverage. The *Los Angeles Times*, the *Miami Herald*, and *The New York Times* all have full-time business reporters covering Latin America. Bloomberg, expanding faster, has twenty-four reporters in

seven countries and more than 1,000 subscribers in the region. Reuters has doubled its Latin American staff in the last decade to 130 full-time reporters. "There's no distinction between financial and political news," says Bernd Debusmann, Reuters's Americas news editor. "If there's a big corruption scandal people need to know in order to make their investment decisions."

Yet within Latin America, it's hard to get access to even basic financial information — such as company ownership. For journalists who want to know more than the earnings of a publicly traded company or the foreign reserves in the central bank good sources remain indispensable.

In Mexico, for example, public documents and inside sources have played a major role in the coverage of the devastating peso devaluation in December, 1994. Ever since the devaluation forced the Mexican economy into a two-year long recession, there has been an intense public debate about who is responsible — the former administration of Carlos Salinas de Gortari, or the current administration of Ernesto Zedillo. The debate has been waged with statistics about current account deficits, foreign reserves, the movement of capital in and out of the stock exchange. Leaked information about private meetings also has been important. Rossana Fuentes, an editor

The School of Journalism at the University of Montana-Missoula

DEAN

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The position is tenurable. The appointment will be effective July 1, 1998.

Applications received by February 1, 1998, will be given full consideration and should include a statement of interest addressing the qualifications, a professional resumé and three current professional references. Nominations are encouraged and should be received by January 10, 1998. The position will be open until filled. Applications and nominations should be sent to:

Journalism Dean Search Committee
c/o Robert Kindrick, Provost
The University of Montana
Missoula, MT 59812



The University of Montana

Questions may be directed to:
E. Edwin Eck, Chair of the Committee, (406) 243-4311.

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with the Mexico City daily *Reforma*, broke ground with her three-part series on the devaluation published in May 1995, that showed how ineptitude and personality conflicts within the government contributed to the debacle.

It was Oppenheimer at *The Miami Herald* who first broke the story about Raúl Salinas's Swiss bank account, and reporting by *Reforma*, and *The Wall Street Journal* helped complete the picture of how the former first brother managed to assemble a fortune totaling \$120 million. In November 1995, after Salinas had already been jailed for several months, charged with masterminding the murder of a rival

politician, prosecutors investigating that murder turned up a fake passport used by Salinas. Using the pseudonym on the passport, authorities were able to locate Swiss accounts containing \$84 million. Salinas' wife Paulina Castañón was arrested by Swiss authorities while attempting to make a withdrawal. Salinas' money was apparently spirited out of Mexico through Mexico City's Citibank office. Following the money trail, Oppenheimer located international bank records demonstrating that Salinas lent a Mexican executive nearly \$30 million that was used to buy a television network that was privatized by the government. The bank records — later published in

the Mexican press — show the money was moved through the account of Silverstar, a Panama-based import-export company.

While access to new information has given journalists enormous new power, *Financial Times* Latin America editor Stephen Fidler argues that there are special dangers faced by a powerful press in countries where weak judiciaries lack the clout to carry out prosecutions. "The whole effect is to undermine confidence in democratic institutions," says Fidler.

That has certainly been the case in Colombia, where despite extensive and well documented reports linking President Ernesto Samper to the Cali drug cartel, the congress was unable to mount enough political support to kick him out. In August 1995, fifteen months after Samper had taken office, *El Tiempo*, Colombia's leading daily, published testimony taken from a campaign aide, Santiago Medina. In his depositions, taken before the prosecutors office, Medina claimed that he had helped raise nearly \$6 million in campaign contributions from members of the Cali cartel. The contributions, Medina testified, had been solicited at the behest of the candidate himself in exchange for lenient treatment for traffickers should Samper win the election.

The revelations — apparently received from a source in the federal prosecutor's office — forced the resignation and arrest of Defense Minister Fernando Botero, who had served as Samper's campaign chairman. Samper survived impeachment proceedings in Congress but, largely because of the allegations, has lost virtually all of his political support. Francisco Santos, editor of *El Tiempo*, says he hasn't become cynical over Samper's holding onto his office because the press has stepped up its role as watchdog. "We've lost our fear of power," says Santos, referring to the Samper scandal.

Despite the advances, the Latin American press faces serious obstacles. Many financial reporters lack the technical training to evaluate and analyze economic statistics. A new generation of journalists is only beginning to explore the limits and responsibilities of a free press. Meanwhile, violent or repressive responses from powerful figures unaccustomed to public scrutiny continue to make journalism a very dangerous profession in Latin America.

While Gustavo Gorriti managed to thwart the recent efforts by the Panamanian government to expel him, he hopes to return to Peru and track how money flows through the government of Alberto



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Fujimori. "When I was working in Peru I was so unprepared to do this kind of reporting that if a [financial] story hit me in the face I wouldn't have seen it," says Gorriti.

But when he leaves Panama he will leave behind converts at *La Prensa*. A year after Gorriti arrived in Panama, Rolando Rodríguez — who had the highly coveted political beat at the paper —

asked for a transfer to the business section. He felt that he would have more opportunities to do investigative reporting. Rodríguez soon found plenty of good stories. With 120 banks, Panama is one of the world's most important offshore banking centers. Rodríguez joined a team of reporters investigating how financial mismanagement by Panamanian government regulators put investors

at risk. Working with Gorriti, and business editor Miren Gutiérrez, Rodríguez began to examine the efforts of Taiwan and China to gain influence in Panama before the country gains complete control of the canal in 2000.

"This is virgin territory," says Rodríguez. "If you look closely, you always find there's money dancing under the table." ♦

COLOMBIA JOURNALISTS SUFFER SETBACKS ON THE ROAD TO PRESS FREEDOM

When Ernesto Samper won the presidency of Colombia in 1994, reporters had high hopes after years of terror and intimidation. Samper was known as a friend of the press. His father had been a columnist at *El Tiempo*, the nation's leading daily. His brother Daniel, a former Neiman fellow, was Colombia's leading investigative reporter. President Samper, like dozens of Colombian journalists over the last decade, had been a victim of drug violence and still had four bullets in his body from a 1989 assassination attempt. How could such a man not protect and respect the press?

The honeymoon between the president and the media lasted barely a year. In July 1995, Samper's former campaign treasurer told prosecutors he had received nearly \$6 million from the Cali cocaine cartel to fund Samper's presidential bid. *El Tiempo* published the secret testimony. News programs began groundbreaking investigations into the supposed drug links of the president and his allies in Congress. The news-magazine *Semana* produced a secretly taped conversation between the president and the wife of a Cali drug trafficker discussing potential campaign contributors and a diamond ring for Mrs. Samper.

As prosecutors took up press leads and widened their own investigations to include the possible drug links of some forty-nine people, including leading members of Samper's Liberal party, the president began to speak of a "lynching" by the press. "Excessive and exaggerated information has been produced, news distorted, slanders repeated," he said on TV in January 1996.

The president even appeared to blame the media for the violence committed against them, as if the messengers deserved a cruel fate for the messages they were delivering. Last March, gunmen stepped up to Gerardo Bedoya, the deputy manager of Cali's leading daily, *El Pais*, and shot him dead in front of his house, only days after the journalist had written a column lashing out at the

nation's drug traffickers. In November, three more journalists were gunned down. They were: a magazine writer who'd been sharply critical of political corruption, a court reporter, and a radio journalist who advocated peace in a region convulsed by guerrilla and death squad killing. That lifted the number of journalists murdered in Colombia over the last decade to sixty-nine. But Samper's reaction to the violence against reporters has been typically nonchalant. "The news media have been formed by action and violence, and what does not march to that tempo is left out," he told a meeting of the Inter-American Press Association in Guatemala last August.

Samper's congressional cronies went further, openly promoting censorship. Taking advantage of weak legal protections for the broadcast media, his closest supporters pushed through a television law suspending twelve-year contracts awarded to programmers under the previous administration. That forced news programs to bid again for slots they thought were guaranteed. Worse, it forced them to submit those bids to a five-man National Television Commission, three of whose members were close Samper allies.

On October 27, the commission awarded licenses to ten news programs, eliminating two of the most serious and investigative shows. Knocked out was *AM-PM*, a newscast that has given more space to minority voices (peasants, ethnic groups, and other non-official sources not regularly covered) and the violation of human rights (massacres, forced disappearances) than any other program. *AM-PM* had the second highest rating last year among all ten national news programs. Many journalists believe the program was punished for broadcasting images of the president's defense lawyer confidently passing notes to the congressman in charge of impeachment proceedings that later exonerated Samper. Margarita Mesa, the program's director, says the program was simply too independent. "We didn't have the backing of the traditional political dynasties or the dominant economic groups," she says.

QAP, a newscast owned by Nobel Prize-winning novelist Gabriel García Márquez and four of the nation's most distinguished journalists, was also eliminated after dropping out of the bidding in protest against the perceived bias. "This new television law had the smell of revenge and was intended to punish critics of congress and the government," says Enrique Santos Calderón, one of the owners. "García Márquez and I publicly stated that we weren't going to bow down to such twisted rules of the game."

But many producers of newscasts have capitulated. With millions of dollars at stake in the runup to the bidding, the crusading spirit of the drug scandal's first year has all but disappeared. Owners and editors of news programs privately admit to self-censorship. They acknowledge they made implicit commitments to the Television Commission "to go soft" on important politicians.

Radio stations appear to be the next targets. Last August, a scandal erupted around the bidding for 81 FM radio frequencies when the energy minister and the minister of communications were secretly taped discussing fixing one bid for "friends of the president." The two ministers were forced to resign. But many of the frequencies already have been handed over to Samper supporters. Few in the media believe the remaining 100 awards will be given out fairly.

"I'm not optimistic about the future of the press," says a journalist whose news program has done some of the toughest reporting. "The media were on the right road, gaining greater independence every day from the dominant political forces. But recent events have put us back many years. At stake is not only journalists' freedom to do their jobs, but the right of Colombians to know with certainty what is happening in their country." —by Steven Ambrus

Ambrus is a free-lance correspondent in Colombia for Newsweek.

TELL IT LONG TAKE YOUR TIME GO IN DEPTH

Some newspapers are giving writers a wealth of time and space, urging them to get intimate with subjects. They call it Immersion Journalism.

BY STEVE WEINBERG

The standards that guide newspapers have been updated in some newsrooms to better harmonize with the conventional wisdom of the '90s: 1) Keep it short — readers have tiny attention spans. 2) Don't dig too deeply — libel and invasion-of-privacy lawsuits drain profits. 3) Stick to the time-tested definitions of news — crime, politics, sports, celebrities. 4) Keep reporting costs low. Way low.

But some reporters and editors have found an intriguing way to break free from those restraints. A significant and growing number of them are publishing in-depth narratives based on months of high-cost, high-risk immersion journalism. They are injecting real storytelling into their stories, producing memorable narratives, long ones, about the not-so-ordinary aspects of ordinary life.

A case in point is the Baltimore *Sun*'s

Steve Weinberg, a CJR contributing editor, is a former executive director of Investigative Reporters and Editors. He teaches journalism at the University of Missouri, and is working on a biography of Ida Tarbell.

"A Stage in Their Lives," written by Ken Fuson and published in June — a 16,000-word series covering seventeen broadsheet pages over six days.

Earlier, for fifteen years at *The Des Moines Register*, Fuson worked to perfect this unorthodox brand of newspaper reporting. In 1996 the *Sun*'s editors, as part of a concerted effort to alter the daily's tone, lured him to Baltimore. To



Walt Harrington, formerly of *The Washington Post*, left; Ken Fuson of the *Baltimore Sun*, right

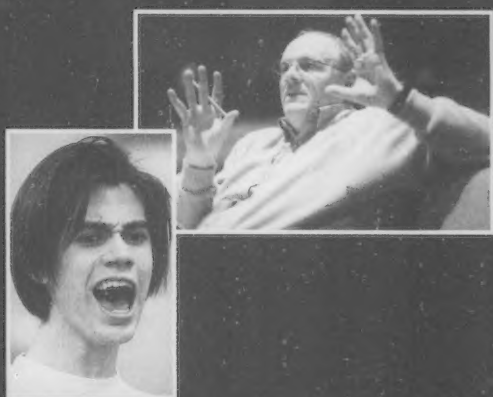
write "A Stage in Their Lives," he immersed himself for four months in the lives of students playing key roles in their high school's production of *West Side Story*. It was a challenge, and Fuson succeeded. On one level, his series is a tale about the production of a high school musical. On a deeper level it is a master-

ful story about teenagers coming of age in the complicated 1990s.

Magazines such as *The New Yorker*, *Esquire*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *Rolling Stone* have published this brand of journalism, off and on, for decades. Book publishers in the business of depth journalism have offered outstanding examples from authors such as J. Anthony Lukas, Tracy Kidder, and Nicholas Lemann. Newspapers large enough to publish Sunday magazines occasionally encouraged this kind of writing before the 1990s.

Sunday magazines are shrinking, but this form of newspaper journalism is not. These days immersion journalism is finding a safe home — along with occasional controversy — in the broadsheet pages of such papers as *The Seattle Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, *Newsday*, the *St. Petersburg Times*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *The Miami Herald*, and the *Providence Journal-Bulletin*, not to mention the *Sun*.

Newspapers are producing valuable, innovative, and sometimes beautiful examples of this against-the-grain kind of work. Writers are drawing readers into what are sometimes the equivalent of books, testing the notion that readers still like to read.



The *Sun*'s Fuson wrote 16,000 words about the production of a high school play in Ferndale, Maryland, and about teenagers coming of age in the complicated 1990s. Above, as *West Side Story* reaches its opening-night finale at North County High School last April 17, Brian Forte (Tony) collapses in the arms of Angela Brown (Maria). Insets: a frustrated Eli Senter (Riff) during rehearsal, and faculty director Wayne Shipley, shaping his final production before retirement. Below right: cast and crew in a moment of silence shortly before the curtains rise on opening night.

MISSIONARIES

Immersion journalism has a history at the *Sun*. In 1979, at the *Evening Sun*, the morning paper's now-defunct partner, Jon Franklin won the first of two Pulitzer Prizes for a work of narrative immersion journalism, "Mrs. Kelly's Monster."

Franklin had been working up to such an opportunity. For years at the *Evening Sun* he sought topics that would allow him to use the techniques of fiction "while observing all the journalistic niceties," as he puts it. "I went out and looked for stories that fit that way of doing it. I practiced. I did a story about a

day in the life of a dog catcher. I did a day in the life of a profoundly retarded man."

"Mrs. Kelly's Monster" started out to be a feature on a woman undergoing brain surgery. Franklin assumed the surgery would be successful, ending Mrs. Kelly's fifty-seven years of pain. He interviewed Mrs. Kelly and her husband. He talked to her daughter separately and with Dr. Thomas Barbee Ducker, the surgeon. That was it, he figured, except for showing up at the hospital to look for his ending. Then the surgery went wrong. Mrs. Kelly died.

Franklin assumed that he had lost his story. Later he had a revelation: he would write about the surgery through Dr.

Ducker's eyes. The 4,000-word story that emerged opens this way:

In the cold hours of a winter morning Dr. Thomas Barbee Ducker, chief brain surgeon at the University of Maryland Hospital, rises before dawn. His wife serves him waffles but no coffee. Coffee makes his hands shake.

In 1985, Franklin won his second Pulitzer for another long-form piece, "The Mind Fixers," about the new science of molecular psychiatry. Then he left to start a teaching career at the University of Maryland and the University of Oregon. In 1986, his book *Writing for Story* (Atheneum) explained step by step how to practice the kind of journalism that had won him honors.

NANINE HARTZ/REUTERS; THE BALTIMORE SUN

IMMERSION GETS DIGITAL



Lynn Franklin

Some of the sages of immersion journalism are taking their storytelling to the World Wide Web. But the nonfiction novellas and literary journalism found at *bylines* (<http://www.bylines.org>) are not merely For Your Information — they are for sale.

The site is the creation of University of Oregon writing teacher and two-time Pulitzer honoree Jon Franklin; his wife, Lynn, a writer and editor (she publishes



Jon Franklin

WriterL, an internet newsletter for writers of literary nonfiction); and former Baltimore *Evening Sun* projects editor George Rodgers. By December, the *bylines* virtual bookshelf was offering eighteen long pieces for credit-card sale. "Birth of a Steinway," 18,500 words by Michael Lenehan about the making of a piano, for example, goes for 79 cents, and "Comfort Me With Apples," by Lynn Franklin — "How the quest for perfection almost destroyed the perfect fruit" — goes for 99 cents for 28,000 words. Writers get 60 percent of the gross sales, with the rest divided between the editors and the organizations that provide support, including Investigative Reporters and Editors, or IRE.

The *bylines* editors say they want "humanist" journalism — "real" stories about "real" people — as well as fiction and poetry. Selling such fare on the Web fits the philosophy. In an explanation of "the *bylines* ethic on the site, the editors argue that "the entire history of modern publishing is a tale in which publishers have steadily pushed readers and writers further apart," and that one result is that the economics of writing for a living has become so grim that "fewer and fewer talented young people are willing to consider the writing trade It is our ambitious aim to confront this literary disaster head-on, simplifying the exchange between writer and reader and focusing our business solely on the value of the words we sell."

— JARRETT MURPHY

Jarrett Murphy is an intern at CJR.

In Baltimore, however, Franklin's brand of journalism made only rare appearances in the *Sun* after his departure. Not many reporters knew how to carry it off, and not many editors encouraged them. "Hard news is cheaper," Franklin says. "Event-oriented news is easier for editors to predict and control."

Then, in the early 1990s, John Carroll and Bill Marimow accepted jobs as editor and managing editor of the *Sun*. Carroll, a *Sun* reporter from 1966 to 1972, returned in 1991 after high-level editing jobs at *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the Lexington *Herald-Leader*. In Kentucky, Carroll had retained Franklin as a consultant to discuss storytelling with the newsroom staff. After becoming the *Sun*'s editor, Carroll hired Marimow, who had won two Pulitzers for investigative reporting at the *Inquirer* before becoming a city editor there.

"I love in-depth reporting and writing, and so does John," Marimow says. "We were looking for people to practice literary journalism based on great reporting." Both men had been influenced by editor Gene Roberts at *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, before he left to teach and then to

become managing editor at *The New York Times*. Under Roberts the *Inquirer* had dominated investigative reporting during the 1970s and 1980s. Immersion/narrative journalism had taken something of a back seat to fact-driven exposés, but it was not absent.

In particular, Donald Drake, the *Inquirer*'s medical writer, had parlayed his interest in playwriting to develop his narrative storytelling based on immersion reporting. Five years in a row he spent almost half his time chronicling the successes and disappointments of one class at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. Eventually Roberts hired a new medical writer to cover the hard news on the beat so Drake could concentrate on long-form storytelling.

Today, Drake's title at the *Inquirer* is assistant metropolitan editor, and he works with daily reporters, encouraging them to inject storytelling into their quick-turnaround pieces. He also works with veterans such as Stacey Burling and Michael Vitez on their long-term immersion projects. Vitez won a 1997 Pulitzer for his project, "Final Choices: Seeking

The Good Death," an extended piece about the choices that dying people and their families make. Drake helped Burling with her "Community of Hope: Waiting for a Heart," in which the readers observed transplant candidates living on the same hospital corridor, wondering daily who would get the next available heart and who would leave in a box.

THE NEXT GENERATION

At the *Sun*, Carroll and Marimow searched for a new generation of Donald Drakes and Jon Franklins. This has led to blockbuster stories like "God's Other Plan," a January 1997 narrative serial by reporter Patricia Meisoi about a lawyer going through pregnancy while dying of cancer; "The Umpire's Sons," a December 1996 story by Lisa Pollak about the lives of two boys fathered by John Hirschbeck, the major league baseball umpire spat upon by Roberto Alomar, and the genetic disease that had killed one while afflicting the other; "Witness to Slavery," a June 1996 narrative series by Gregory Kane and Gilbert A. Lewthwaite about the slave trade in Sudan; and "Spreading the Word," a July 1997 series by Ginger Thompson, who traveled to Peru to immerse herself in the world of two American linguists doubling as missionaries.

Then there is Ken Fuson, who works with Jan Winburn, an editor Carroll and Marimow hired from *The Hartford Courant*, who had been Fuson's editor nearly two decades earlier at the Columbia, Missouri, *Daily Tribune*. Fuson's "A Stage in Their Lives" is perhaps the most counterintuitive of all the *Sun*'s recent narrative immersion stories, since a high school play is by definition both chaotic and ordinary.

Indeed, as he hung out with students day after day, Fuson started worrying about how he would organize the sprawling piece. He found himself with at least fifteen characters, too many for a focused narrative. He emerged from his dilemma after a conversation with Lisa Pollak, his *Sun* colleague, who suggested he concentrate on those with the most at stake.

The five students Fuson chose were pictured on each of the six days the story ran, with a soap opera-like caption under each photograph. On day one, the cutline under Angie Guido's picture says, "She has a vision of herself in the starring role. But wait — another girl stands in the way." On day two: "She finds out today — is she Maria? No other role will do." And so on.

Part one of the narrative opens like this:

Spellbound she sits, her mother on one side, her boyfriend on the other, as another

young woman performs the role that will someday be hers.

Since she was little, Angie Guido has dreamed of standing on stage, playing the Puerto Rican girl who falls in love with the boy named Tony.

Maria.

She will be Maria in *West Side Story*.

Say it loud and there's music playing.



John Carroll, editor, left, and William Marimow, managing editor, right, of the Baltimore Sun

That's me, mom, she said.

Say it soft and it's almost like praying.

It won't be long, Angie thinks as she delights in a touring company production of *West Side Story* at the Lyric Opera House in Baltimore. She and twenty members of the Drama Club from North County High School in Anne Arundel County attend the December show with a few parents. This is a prelude; there is expectant talk they will stage the same show for their spring musical.

Someday soon, Angie hopes, she will own the role that is rightfully hers. She has been a loyal drama club soldier, serving on committees, singing in the chorus when she yearned for a solo, watching lead roles slip away because she didn't look the part. But Maria is short, as she is, and dark, as she is, and more than that, Angie is a senior. This will be her last spring musical. Her last chance to shine.

But on the very next night, in that very same theater, another girl from North County High School sits spellbound, her mother on one side, her best friend on the other.

She, too, is captivated by the Puerto Rican girl with the pretty voice.

She, too, wonders: What if that were me?

Reader response was overwhelmingly positive. Fuson heard from teenagers who had read every word, from parents who had been captivated. Carroll and Marimow are so certain that their brand of long-form journalism is good business that they are building reporting and editing staffs to do more of it.

WHEN TIME EQUALS TRUTH

For daily newspapers, with a news cycle that seems to spin ever faster, the most revolutionary of the elements of immersion/narrative report-

ing is the immersion itself — the ability to take the time to get it right.

At the *St. Petersburg Times*, Anne Hull took six months to immerse herself in the lives of a male teenaged assailant and a female Tampa police officer whose fates intertwined on July 4, 1992, when the teenager held a gun to her skull and



Patricia Meisoi, left, and Lisa Pollak, right; both are features reporters for the Sun.

pulled the trigger, although the gun misfired. Hull had learned immersion journalism from her newspaper colleague Tom French, who used it that year to show day-to-day life at a high school.

G. Wayne Miller at the *Providence Journal-Bulletin* also entered that challenging world of high school, in 1992-1993, by immersing himself in the lives of two students. Among other practitioners and proselytizers who have achieved recognition are Terrie Claffin at the Medford, Oregon, *Mail Tribune*, David Hanners at *The Dallas Morning News*, Richard Ben Cramer and Steve Twomey at *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Eric Nalder at *The Seattle Times*, David Finkel at three newspapers (the *Tallahassee Democrat*, the *St. Petersburg Times*, and *The Washington Post*), Jack Hart at the *Portland Oregonian*, and Roy Peter Clark, who has written for the *St. Petersburg Times* while teaching at the Poynter Institute for Media Studies.

Walt Harrington, who left *The Washington Post* last year to free-lance and teach at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana, says his goal is "to understand other people's worlds from the inside out, to portray people as they understand themselves. Not the way they say they understand themselves, but the way they really understand themselves. The way, as a subject once told me, you understand yourself 'when you say your prayers in a quiet room.'"

That kind of understanding rarely comes quickly. In journalism, time sometimes equals truth. Tom Wolfe, in a 1972 essay, called this patient, deep reporting an "essential first move" because scenes, not just disparate facts, are necessary to write compelling narrative. "Therefore," Wolfe wrote, "your main problem as a

reporter is, simply, managing to stay with whomever you are writing about long enough for the scenes to take place before your own eyes The initial problem is always to approach total strangers, move in on their lives in some fashion, ask questions you have no natural right to expect answers to, ask to see things you



Donald Drake, a.m.e. at the Sun, left; Leon Dash, a reporter at *The Washington Post*, right

weren't meant to see Many journalists find it so ungentlemanly, so embarrassing, so terrifying even, that they are never able to master this."

Leon Dash almost fell into this trap at the beginning of his work on "When Children Want Children," his 1986 *Washington Post* series (expanded into a 1989 book) on why so many urban teenagers became involved in out-of-wedlock births. It was thirteen years ago that he rented a basement room in an economically depressed District of Columbia neighborhood, struggling to understand a different world by living in it.

He had resisted the suggestion of his *Post* editor, Bob Woodward, at first, because he thought he already knew many of the answers. As he wrote in the prologue of his book, "I assumed that the high incidence of teenage pregnancy among poor, black urban youths nationwide grew out of youthful ignorance both about birth-control methods and adolescent reproductive capabilities. I also thought the girls were falling victim to cynical manipulation by the boys I was wrong on all counts."

It was not until five weeks after moving to the Highlands that Dash realized that without immersion he would have missed the truth — that so many of these girls chose pregnancy to gain the attention and respect they were desperate for. The realization came during an interview with a sixteen-year-old girl who was beginning to trust him. It took Dash another year of immersion in the neighborhood to fill in the gaps. Part of the process is talking to sources again and again. One young woman who told Dash the truth did so in the fifth hour of her third interview.

From 1988 to 1994, Dash spent consid-

REPORTING

erable time on one family. The result was an eight-part *Post* series titled "Rosa Lee's Story," followed by a book. Dash met Rosa Lee Cunningham in 1988. At age fifty-two, she was serving time in the District of Columbia jail for selling heroin. A mother at age fourteen, Rosa Lee had given birth to eight children by five fathers, and had more than thirty grandchildren when she and Dash started talking. Six of her children had followed her into a life of crime.

When Dash suggested that he spend time with her after her release, she agreed, saying maybe her story would help others avoid her path. In journalistic terms, those years paid off, but Dash had trouble drawing the line between observation and friendship.

He managed to produce outstanding journalism while straddling the line, but others fail. As Tom Wolfe noted in his anthology *The New Journalism* (Harper & Row), "If a reporter stays with a person or group long enough, they — reporter and subject — will develop a personal relationship . . . They become stricken with a sense of guilt, responsibility, obligation . . . People who become overly sensitive on this score inevitably turn out second-rate work, biased in such banal ways

that they embarrass even the subjects they think they are 'protecting.'"

Not everybody, though. Kidder mentioned a carpenter he saw regularly while researching the book, *House* (Houghton-Mifflin). "I remember his saying at one point that he and the other builders ought to put a bell around my neck, so they'd know where I was at all times."

ORDINARY, EXTRAORDINARY

A cornerstone of this journalism trend is an emphasis on noncelebrities. They could be called "ordinary people," except that journalists choosing them believe part of the job is to find the extraordinary in the ordinary.

Several journalists who focus on non-celebrities cite this quotation from historian Will Durant: "Civilization is a stream with banks. The stream is sometimes filled with blood from people killing, stealing, shouting and doing the things historians usually record; while on the banks, unnoticed, people build homes, make love, raise children, sing songs, write poetry and even whittle statues. The story of civilization is the story of what happened on the banks. Historians are pessimists because they ignore the banks for the river."

Walt Harrington's focus on life along the

banks is evident from the titles of the three books collecting his pieces: *American Profiles: Somebodies and Nobodies Who Matter*; *At the Heart of It: Ordinary People, Extraordinary Lives* (both University of Missouri Press); and *Intimate Journalism: The Art and Craft of Reporting Everyday Life* (Sage). Harrington is puzzled by journalists in general, and at many newspapers in particular, who fail to chronicle the "momentous events of everyday life."

But he recognizes that it can be difficult to do. With notable exceptions, Harrington writes in *Intimate Journalism*, "What passes for everyday-life journalism is too often a mishmash of superficial stories about Aunt Sadie cooking pies, unlikely heroes who save people from drowning or drag them from burning buildings, the nice kid next door who turns out to be a serial killer, and poor people who, against the odds, make it to the top. There's nothing wrong with such stories, except that too often they are the end point of everyday-life coverage, reported and edited with the left hand by people unschooled and unaware of the intricate assumptions and techniques of intimate journalism, which results in stories made superficial by both accident and design."

CONGRATULATIONS

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TELLING STORIES

The word "story" is often misused in journalism. Not that many newspaper articles are really stories. They rarely have beginnings, middles, and ends, rarely include foreshadowing, rarely are shot through with narrative drive. That kind of storytelling technique takes years to master.

Tom Wolfe, in a 1972 essay, emphasized four devices: scene-by-scene construction, presenting each scene through the mind of a particular character, extended dialogue between characters, and inclusion of details (how they dress, how they furnish a home, how they treat superiors and subordinates) symbolic of the characters' status lives.

Although Wolfe's precepts are alive, it is Jon Franklin's book *Writing for Story* that almost certainly has influenced the largest number of current newspaper writers, with Harrington's three books further supplementing it. Franklin, in turn, looks to writers of fiction, and writers who describe fiction techniques. His own bible is Robert Meredith and John Fitzgerald's *The Professional Story Writer and His Art* (Crowell, 1963).

HOW LONG, HOW DEEP?

Almost any topic worthy of immersion is worthy of lengthy treatment. But discipline is also key. At the *Evening Sun*, Franklin recalls "writing long" usually meant merely including more detail. Zoning stories "became, well, complete."

G. Wayne Miller, of the *Providence Journal-Bulletin*, says that without a talented, forceful editor, his stories would sometimes be too long. Recalling his seven-part immersion series about the Hasbro toy company, he wrote recently, in the paper's self-published *How I Wrote the Story* collection: "My initial outline was for eight parts, but my editors said 'too much.' They were right. Thus whittled, my concerns became character development, dramatic tension, detail, and subtext — the ironies and paradoxes, some subtle, some not, that told the real story."

Yet the best writers say the real key is the investment of time. An example: journalists profiling professional hockey coach Mike Keenan, while he was with the St. Louis Blues, tended to focus on his volatile temper, his sometimes bizarre behavior during a game. Gary Smith, a magazine writer who started on the sports pages of the *Wilmington Journal* and the

Philadelphia Daily News, went places other writers had not gone, including the apartment where Keenan lived at the time, as well as the inner landscapes of Keenan's mind. Here is Smith's lead, from May 8, 1995, in *Sports Illustrated*:

His home was a three-bedroom unit on the sixteenth floor, filled with the furniture of forgetting. All whites and blacks and glass and metal; each morning, in such a place, was surely the dawn of a clean, fresh start.

The one old thing was his leather briefcase, worn and cracked as an old fisherman's face. "It's the only thing in my life," he remarked, "that I haven't thrown out."

But, it turned out, that wasn't quite true. Late one night, as he tried to explain himself over Amaretto, he fell silent and knelt in front of a small bookcase in his living room. Finally he stood.

"No one who has ever written about me," Mike Keenan said, "has a _____ clue who I am." Then he handed *The Great Gatsby* to me, as if that were proof.

The paperback book was a quarter-century old, yellowing and marked in a variety of inks — sentences he had underlined, words and exclamation points he had scribbled in the margins at different junctures since he was a teen. His eyes glittered as he watched me leaf through it. "It's much more complicated," he pointed out, "than anyone really thinks." ♦

A good idea can become more than just a good idea.

Many of us in journalism talk about the book we intend to write or the project we've been brainstorming in rare quiet moments. Good ideas held captive by the daily demands of our working lives in journalism. Good ideas that remain just good ideas.

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VICTORIA SHANNON

FOREIGN AFFAIRS FAMILY AFFAIRS

More and more couples are serving together as overseas correspondents

BY ROBIN GOLDWYN
BLUMENTHAL

Charles Trueheart, half of *The Washington Post's* Paris bureau, was returning home from a reporting trip in December 1996. His wife, Anne Swardson, who is the other half, had been on duty all day. As Trueheart recalls, "I'd been driving through horrible traffic and got home about six and poured myself a glass of wine. We had six little kids there for an overnight birthday party. Just as I was sitting down, we got the call

Robin Goldwyn Blumenthal, a former Wall Street Journal reporter, is a part-time editor at Barron's and a mother of three.

that a bomb had gone off in the Paris subway." No problem: Trueheart, 46, covered the party; Swardson, 44, went out in her jogging clothes to cover the story. The life of a foreign correspondent, once a frequent path to divorce, is increasingly becoming a family affair.

Only 8 percent of the reporters who were posted abroad for the first time before 1970 had journalist spouses, according to Stephen Hess, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington and the author of *International News & Foreign Correspondents* (Brookings Institution Press, 1996). But by the 1980s that figure had jumped to 39 percent. Today it has reached 44 percent. Many of these spouses work for competing media outlets; others share a bureau for the same outfit, in a wide variety of financial arrangements.

The trend has as much to do with the increase of women in the news business as with a related development: more journalists marrying journalists. But it also reflects a significant change in newsroom attitudes about the balance between work and family. "A lot of news organizations will now tolerate and encourage journalist couples going overseas," Hess says. "It was a change that was hard-fought."

In the past, says Michael Specter, editors "told you where you were going and on what day, and you told your wife" and that was that. Now Specter, 42, runs *The New York Times* Moscow bureau with his wife, Alessandra Stanley, 42. Richard Threlkeld, the CBS correspondent in Moscow, remembers a time when there was an unfortunate attitude among editors about foreign correspondents that

Far left: CNN's Eileen O'Connor and ABC's John Bilotta jointly took care of the kids while competing for stories in Moscow. Left: Charles Trueheart and Anne Swardson run *The Washington Post's* Paris bureau, often taking turns.

"the more you whored around and the drunker you got, the harder you were working, and that therefore you were married" to your news organization. Threlkeld, 60, a journalist for thirty-five years, is married to his competition from CNN, Betsy Aaron, 59.

When a woman had a career, Aaron notes, it was often sacrificed on the altar of her husband's. Stories abound of unhappy spouses, usually wives, who traveled far from home to make a life for their families only to have their husbands away on assignment most of the time. But many of these stories have changed. "Where once, to generalize terribly, people were willing to give up marriages for the sake of their careers, people are now willing to accept radical change in their careers for the sake of their marriages and families," says Simon K. C. Li, foreign editor of the *Los Angeles Times*. Out of twenty-four foreign correspondents, Li's paper has seven overseas correspondents who are married to working journalists.

Kristin Huckshorn, 40, who opened a bureau in Hanoi for the *San Jose Mercury News* in 1994, feels fortunate to be married to a journalist who was "ready to give me my turn" and to take a chance with his own career in order to do so. Her husband, Tim Larimer, 37, became the Hanoi bureau chief for *Time* in mid-1996, but he first came overseas as a free-lancer.

It's not necessarily easy when two careers — and two news organizations — are involved. Candice Hughes, of *The Associated Press*, and Richard Boudreaux, 49, of the *Los Angeles Times*, transferred from Moscow to Rome in February, but "until January, we didn't know if it was going to be a commuting relationship," Hughes says, because she wasn't sure whether she would get posted to Rome. And they are always concerned about the next move.

Still, "it's like we're living history together," says Boudreaux. "Only people who do this for a living," he adds, can understand the benefits of working side by side. "It's so much richer to really share this kind of life with someone who's into the story."

When it comes to hiring couples for overseas, *The New York Times* is the trend setter. By the end of 1998, there will be

eight couples working for the paper overseas — 44 percent of the foreign staff. "If you're a member of a two-career couple, that sort of statistic should be reassuring," says Andrew Rosenthal, the paper's foreign editor.

One of the reasons the *Times* started hiring couples was to avoid having *Times* reporters competing against their husbands and wives, which management didn't like. In some cases, it seems, the *Times* brought reporters' spouses on board to avoid such competitive scenarios. It was Andrew Rosenthal's father, A.M. Rosenthal, who was executive editor at the paper when the issue of competing spouses began to surface. "I did not think it was a great idea for *The New York Times* bureau, in a country where there are very few correspondents, and *The Washington Post* bureau, to, in effect, share news," he says. "I was never against married couples staffing a bureau, but we didn't have many." He says he's "very happy" with the ubiquity of couples now on the foreign staff.

Reservations about couples competing directly against each other seem to have receded somewhat. John Bussey, foreign editor of *The Wall Street Journal*, says he expects that his China bureau chief, Marcus Brauchli, 36, married to the *Los Angeles Times* Hong Kong bureau chief Maggie Farley, 31, will remain professionally competitive with his spouse. "You just trust that the one working for you is going to beat the other," Bussey says. "The alternative is to have some rigid, ridiculous rule that says a spouse can't work for a competitor."

Not every editor is so sanguine. Eileen O'Connor, 38, a CNN reporter who covers the White House, remembers the reaction of her bosses when she and her husband, John Bilotta, 39, returned to Moscow in 1993 — she to be CNN's bureau chief and he to be a producer for ABC. When they asked her about how it would work, she told them she and Bilotta, now a producer on *PrimeTime Live*, would work it out the way they always had — they had been in Tokyo and Moscow together previously — with ground rules. These include an agreement not to pursue each other's exclusives or features and to take turns excusing

Top: *The New York Times's* Ray Bonner answers to his wife, Vienna bureau chief Jane Perlez. **Middle:** Joe Albright and Marcia Kunstel covered the Chechnya war for Cox Newspapers. **Bottom:** When the *Los Angeles Times* sent Richard Boudreaux from Moscow to Rome, Candice Hughes of *The Associated Press* switched postings, too.



ON THE JOB



From Russia with love: Top: Betsy Aaron and Richard Threlkeld (shown at their wedding) work for competitors CNN and CBS. Will Englund and Kathy Lally, bottom, share the Baltimore *Sun*'s "mom-and-pop foreign bureau" in Moscow.

themselves at dinner parties so they could speak privately to guests. O'Connor's bosses weren't convinced. She told them, "if you don't want me to be bureau chief, I can pursue other avenues," and their reservations melted away.

The competitive situation, she concedes, did yield some strange moments, particularly after Bilotta (who had proposed to her by telex, from Bonn to Moscow) was named ABC's Moscow bureau chief early in 1995. Once, O'Connor remembers, her husband "snuck out of the house with his suit in a bag because he didn't want me to know he had an interview with Yeltsin." Despite such difficulties, the couple, who now have five children 1 through 7, seem to have worked out the details very well.

Indeed, to hear the correspondents tell it, this trend is a good one, not only for family life but also in a professional sense. Ray Bonner, 55, who answers to his wife, Jane Perlez, the chief of *The New York Times* Vienna bureau, recalls that "an editor recently commented about how Jane and I really feed off each other. There's a synergy, and we talk about stories and get ideas off each other." Trueheart, of *The Washington Post*, agrees, noting that talking with a partner helps

replace the give-and-take with editors that is lost to vast distances.

"You're there together trying to figure out a foreign culture and a foreign language, and if one of you is doing the shopping and one of you is in the office, the one in the grocery store is just as likely to get the interesting story," says Fred Hiatt, 42, who with his wife, Margaret Shapiro, also 42, pioneered the *Post*'s overseas couples job-sharing arrangement, in the paper's Tokyo and Moscow bureaus.

By most accounts, sharing a beat with a spouse is vastly preferable to competing. Julia Preston, 46, who works with her husband, Sam Dillon, 46, the Mexico City bureau chief of *The New York Times*, competed against him when they were both covering Central America — she for *The Washington Post*, he for *The Miami Herald*. After the couple had a daughter (now 7), the competitive arrangement "was becoming logistically impossible," she says. "If a story would happen someplace else, we'd both have to leave, sometimes for unpredictably long times. We felt an increasing need to get more control" over such situations.

Other couples concur. Working together, they note, allows each to work at home part of the time, and thus makes it easier to be with the children. When a big story erupts, partner/spouses can spell each other.

For editors, the spouse-run bureau has a number of advantages, not the least of which is financial. The employer gets more coverage without necessarily paying full freight for it. For one thing, the two correspondents share housing and other expenses. As for pay, the deals vary.

At *The Washington Post*, which has a nepotism rule prohibiting spouses from working at the paper (unless they marry after they start working there), six out of twenty-three foreign staffers are married to each other. All the couples work in some kind of job-sharing arrangement, with the paper paying the salary of one staffer plus some fraction, usually one quarter or one half for the other, and with benefits. In effect, the *Post* gets two full-time reporters for that reduced price, since each spouse often puts in more than the allotted fraction.

At *The New York Times*, the deals also vary. In roughly half the cases, both spouses are hired full time; in the rest of the cases, one is on staff

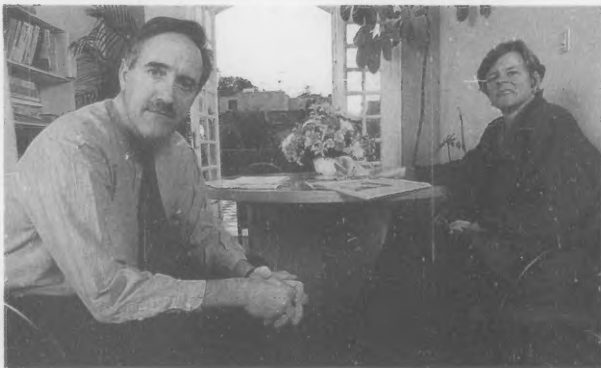
and the spouse is a contract reporter — no benefits, although the employed spouse's health insurance usually applies.

Jackson Diehl, assistant managing editor for foreign news at the *Post*, concedes that when the paper started overseas job-sharing in the 1980s, "there was some concern that couples would feel exploited, because many work full time or close to it and don't get full salaries." But, he adds, "most felt it was a really good tradeoff." Cox Newspapers' Joe Albright, 60, and Marcia Kunstel, 50, found themselves working "300 percent" of the time when they were first assigned to job-share in Moscow in 1993. But though they earned less than two full salaries, the advantages were clear. When they covered the uprising in Chechnya, for example, one would be out on the battlefield while the other was in Moscow. "By having two of us on a story like that," says Albright, "we could hold our own against the big bureaus." The couple was posted to Asia in January.

Shared reporting can have its down side. As CBS's Threlkeld points out, "if you have a marriage that already has trouble, the strains of living overseas are only going to make it worse." But most couples say they wouldn't trade the experience for the world. Shapiro and Hiatt went so far as to try to bring their job-sharing arrangement back to Washington with them for an editing job, but management opposed it. "Job-sharing in editing can be confusing," says executive editor Leonard Downie Jr.

At least one couple has managed to job-share both at home and abroad. Will Englund, 44, and his wife Kathy Lally, 50, began rotating monthly in 1984 as education reporters for the Baltimore *Sun*, then went to Moscow. They returned home to two full-time posts, but this fall went back, with their two daughters, to Moscow. "In a way when you're running a mom-and-pop foreign bureau," says Englund, "the whole family stays close." ♦

When a big story breaks in Mexico, *The New York Times*'s Sam Dillon and Julia Preston can spell each other to avoid leaving their young daughter.



KEITH DONNEMILLY/SABA

CJR World

SWEDEN

THE MAN WHO TOLD THE SECRET

It took a non-Swede to get the full story of a government sterilization program

The revelations in Sweden's largest newspaper, *Dagens Nyheter*, shocked the world: long admired as a model of the enlightened and humane social welfare state, Sweden had forcibly sterilized more than 60,000 people, mostly women, between 1935 and 1976. The sterilizations were part of a government program designed to weed out "social undesirables" in the pursuit of a stronger, purer, more Nordic population. Those undesirables included, as the paper put it in a subhead, "mixed race individuals," single mothers with many children, deviants, Gypsies, and other 'vagabonds.'"

The program's Nazi overtones were disturbing, yet inescapable. Under the headline RACIAL PURITY IN THE WELFARE STATE, reporter Maciej Zaremba put it this way in his two-part series in August: "In Sweden, it was only under Social Democratic rule and in Germany only under Nazism that citizens could be deprived of their reproductive functions as a result of their origins or their disabilities."

His stories may have been a jolt for Swedes, but it was no surprise that it was Zaremba who produced them. For more than a decade, Zaremba, 46, has been exposing the underside of Sweden's welfare state in *Dagens Nyheter*, a 380,000-circulation morning newspaper that is Sweden's most influential voice. He has uncovered abuses in trusted institutions: the State Marine Institute, the Ministry of



Maciej Zaremba

Social Affairs, and Sweden's celebrated judicial system. But this time he challenged the utopian vision Swedes hold of themselves and their government, and called into question a piece of their national identity.

The sterilization program is not mentioned in Swedish history texts. Like most Swedes, Zaremba didn't know very much about the Swedish Sterilization Act, which was passed by the Parliament in 1935 and stayed on the books for forty-one years. Early in 1997, Zaremba came across an obscure book about sterilization, which was co-written by historian Gunnar Broberg of the University of Lund, but published only in the United States. Immediately, Zaremba

"CITIZENS COULD BE DEPRIVED OF THEIR REPRODUCTIVE FUNCTIONS AS A RESULT OF THEIR ORIGINS OR DISABILITIES."

knew he was looking at a major story: "The numbers of sterilizations Broberg uncovered convinced me this program was much bigger and more widespread than anyone ever imagined."

So Zaremba read everything he could

Zaremba's opening story in *Dagens Nyheter*, and a page-one follow in *The Washington Post*

about sterilization in Sweden and around the world — including the U.S., where forced sterilization of the mentally disabled, certain criminals, and others was legalized in several states starting in 1907 and continued until the 1960s. In Sweden, meanwhile, Zaremba learned that the sterilization program was rooted in the study of eugenics, a pseudo-science devoted to the creation of a superior race. But the program was expanded in 1941 to include any Swedes who exhibited behavior judged by the state to be anti-social.

His research eventually led him to Majja Runcis, a doctoral student at Stockholm University. For years, Runcis had been researching Swedish sterilization policy. More important to Zaremba, Runcis had access to Sweden's well-protected archives of the State Medical Board, which housed the medical files of tens of thousands of Swedes. Zaremba knew the real story lay in those files.

"Majja and I had a coffee together and after about fifteen minutes, I was so excited I didn't know what to do with myself," he recalls. "I realized that her head was so full of dynamite and she didn't even know it." Zaremba could now prove, with Runcis's help, that thousands of Swedish citizens had been sterilized with the full and even enthusiastic support of their government.

More disturbing, Zaremba discovered



that the sterilizations had never been voluntary, as was believed in Sweden, and as they were portrayed on paper. In the largest group of cases, adolescent girls who fit the state's criteria had been removed from their parents' homes by state officials and put in reform schools or institutions. Then, as a condition for their release, they were forced to undergo sterilization. And the state's criteria could be alarmingly arbitrary: people who fell behind in school were labeled "stupid," people who were outgoing were "sexually promiscuous," and people who were quiet or shy were deemed "anti-social." All were grounds for sterilization. It was clear from the files that sterilization had been forced upon vulnerable and often terrified women, a point Zaremba drove home forcefully in his articles:

Freedom of choice was in fact totally illusory. The person concerned was either declared 'of unsound mind' — a simple procedure — or was subjected to irresistible pressure. Sign this or we'll take the children, sign this or there'll be no social benefit, no flat, no leave . . . and so on. Sweden went furthest in the way of legalized blackmail . . .

Previous reports on the sterilization program, including a documentary on

Swedish Radio, had been largely ignored or dismissed. But in the space of just two articles Zaremba managed to tear away years of myth and secrecy, partly because of the power of his newspaper and partly due to his writing and reporting. "Maciej's greatest strength is his moral compassion," says Arne Ruth, editor-in-chief of *Dagens Nyheter*. "He backs up that morality with the most thorough research imaginable."

Ruth also credits Zaremba with giving his sterilization story the added punch of what he calls a "non-Swede" perspective. Zaremba was born in Poland in 1951. In 1969, he emigrated to Sweden with his mother, fleeing the growing anti-Semitism of communist Poland. He became a Swedish citizen in 1978. He returned in 1980 to Poland during the Solidarity revolution only to leave again when martial law was imposed in 1981.

Ruth believes Zaremba's personal experience with communism makes him a sharper critic of Sweden's brand of socialism. "Maciej has a basic suspicion of the state, which many native-born Swedes don't," says Ruth. "In these articles, he basically dared to say the unsayable — that Swedish Social Democrats had been involved in racism."

That conclusion opened Zaremba to criticism from fellow journalists in

Sweden who accused him of unfairly blaming the Social Democratic and Labor party, which has ruled the country on and off for more than fifty years. Says Gunnar Fredriksson, a columnist at the competing *Aftonbladet*: "The anti-Social Democrat slant seems so important to Maciej, but he forgets that, at the time, these policies were supported by a broad range of political parties in this country and were being implemented in other countries, including the United States. In the end, it will be more important for people to believe the social historians, not Maciej Zaremba."

Zaremba's articles set off a chain reaction of soul-searching by other countries with a history of sterilization programs, including Austria, Switzerland, Denmark, and Norway. In Sweden, the minister of health and social affairs, Margot Wallstrom, whose agency just a year earlier had refused to compensate several victims of sterilization, called the sterilizations "barbaric" and promised to revisit the compensation issue. Indeed, the government set up a commission to investigate the sterilization program and decide if any victims should receive compensation.

—Paul Gallagher

Gallagher is an associate producer for 60 Minutes.

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TUNISIA

DARK SIDE OF A NEW ERA

In 1990 the Tunisian Association of Newspaper Directors proudly joined the World Association of Newspapers (WAN), an international trade organization known for its commitment to the freedom of the press. Seven years later, in June 1997, WAN expelled it for failing to battle serious violations of that freedom. What happened?

Tunisia is a U.S. ally with the image of a politically moderate Mediterranean tourist paradise. But in 1996, when WAN and other human rights groups asked for permission to explore some blemishes on this picture — reports of press repression and of human rights abuses — the government refused, and denied visas. Tunisian journalism, a spokesman insisted, “evolves in an open and pluralistic environment.”

Or so it seems. Paris-based papers *Le Monde* and *Liberation* are sold alongside eight Tunisian dailies, four of which are privately owned. On Tunisian TV, the state-owned Channel 7 competes with Arabic and European satellite channels. But access to satellite dishes and to the Internet is tightly controlled. Foreign correspondents have repeatedly been expelled. And, working under a government that has imprisoned journalists and deprived them of passports and accreditation, the Tunisian independent press has come to mirror the propaganda-driven government outlets. All Tunisian papers now routinely attack dissidents and carry giant pictures and front-page articles lauding President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, whom they refer to as “the leader of the new era.”

New era indeed. After Ben Ali's predecessor, Habib Bourguiba, led the country to independence from France in 1956, the new government founded a school of journalism and let independent journalism take root. When Ben Ali took over after a nonviolent coup in 1987, the press was promised even more freedom. It was in this honeymoon period that the Tunisian editors were admitted to WAN.

But all too soon the government began to use the Islamist threat as a rationale for silencing Islamist and liberal publications alike. Hamadi Jebali, the editor of the Islamist weekly *Al Fajr*, has been imprisoned since 1991 on charges of defamation and plotting to overthrow the gov-

ernment. The independent weekly *Le Maghreb* was forced out of business in 1991, its editor imprisoned for libel.

During the 1994 election, which President Ben Ali, the only candidate, won with 99 percent of the votes, the French dailies *Le Monde* and *Liberation* were banned for nearly a year. Ten French papers were banned in 1995 during a visit of French President Jacques Chirac. In the last six years alone, correspondents working for Reuters, the BBC, AFP, and Radio Netherlands have been expelled.



Ben Ali

Such interference has seriously chilled journalists in Tunisia. Paradoxically, they have some reason to feel envy and admiration when they look across the border to Algeria, where journalists mourn the death of fifty-nine colleagues in the last four years. Despite the conditions in Algeria, says Salima Ghezali, editor of Algeria's *La Nation* and the *World Press Review's* international editor of 1996, “the press here is not as muzzled as the Tunisian one.”

—Kamel Labidi

Labidi is a free-lance journalist and former director of the Tunisian section of *Amnesty International*.

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In the Public Interest

by Lawrence K. Grossman

Aging Viewers: The Best Is Yet to Be

One of today's major TV news liabilities should soon turn out to be one of its biggest assets, although the pooh-bahs who run the television industry haven't caught on yet. Newscasts tend to attract older audiences, a serious deficiency in an industry dedicated to the single-minded pursuit of the young adults advertisers prize most. TV time buyers pay \$23.54 per thousand to reach eighteen-to-thirty-five-year-olds and only \$9.57 per thousand for those over thirty-five, according to industry sources.

Today, people age fifty and older constitute the majority of those who watch ABC's *World News* (54 percent), NBC's *Nightly News* (63 percent), and CBS's *Evening News* (70 percent), which helps explain all the pain remedy, denture adhesives, and gray hair dye commercials within news shows. To lower their audience's age level and raise profitability, TV news producers, national and local alike, keep lightening the content of their newscasts, filling them with titillating tabloid items about crime, celebrities, and gossip, while playing down serious reporting about government, international affairs, and major public issues, whose appeal is thought to be confined largely to older viewers.

For the same reason, network newsmagazines like *Dateline*, *PrimeTime Live*, *48 Hours*, and *20/20* deliver mostly nonfiction entertainment, rather than the serious news that network news divisions used to offer — witness *20/20*'s widely trumpeted Barbara Walters interview with Marv Albert on his sexual peccadilloes; *PrimeTime*'s puff piece by Diane Sawyer on Michael Jackson's sexual troubles; and *Dateline*'s probing report last fall on flirting, "The Mating Game."

Prime time documentary hours on vital issues have all but disappeared from network schedules, replaced by news fluff aimed primarily at young adults. As Laurie Mifflin reported in *The New York Times*, during a single week last fall (not even a sweeps week at that), the Big Three network news divisions all concentrated their firepower on the subject of sex. ABC News and CBS News devoted hour-long shows to adultery — on ABC, a special called, "Love, Lust, and Marriage: Why We Stay, Why We Stray," while CBS's *48 Hours* also focused on the hot news of extramarital affairs. At NBC, "The Sex War: The Tension between Men and Women" appeared on all the network's news programs that week, including *Meet the Press*, *Today*, *Nightly News*, and *Dateline*, as well as on cable's MSNBC.

When I ran NBC News a decade ago, I was as guilty of age myopia as anyone. One day, the president of the television network, Ray Timothy, called to ask if I would mind if commercials for adult diapers, then a newly advertised product, appeared on NBC *Nightly News*. "It's a big order, worth a lot of money," Timothy said. I replied that *Nightly News* had just

risen to number one in the ratings: I thought those spots would hurt its image and damage us competitively. The adult diaper order was turned down.

Now, television has the best of reasons to reform its negative attitude toward mature viewers, one that should especially help the news business. One of the miracles of the twentieth century is that almost three decades have been added to the life span of the average person in the U.S., the equivalent of an entire generation. In 1900, the typical American lived to age forty-seven; today, that's seventy-six. Not only are people living longer, they're also enjoying healthier, more vigorous lives than most younger people experienced in 1900. The aging generation is no longer the rocking chair generation.

The backbone of television's audience, the 76 million baby boomers who were weaned on the tube, have begun to pass fifty. They remain hale and hearty. They have the disposable income that advertisers will learn to love. And they are putting television through its own mid-life crisis.

While network audiences erode, and the number of young adults declines, people age fifty and older are the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population, and spend the most time watching television. Generation X media ad buyers, who consistently devalue the over-forty crowd, will have to awaken to this implacable audience shift.

Those over forty-five now buy half of the new cars and trucks; those over fifty-five buy almost a third of all new vehicles. In fact, most individual consumer spending peaks in the forty-five to fifty-four age group. Now the question is, will the maturing TV audience — which frittered away its younger years on tabloid news — conform to past patterns and tune in to more serious news?

Journalistically, in the coming century this great societal change will make for an exceptionally newsworthy beat. Aging and longevity issues like social security, Medicare, pensions, and health already get major coverage and will continue to do so for the next twenty years or more. There will also be much to report on the vast life-style and societal changes brought about by the unprecedented phenomenon of all those baby boomers living an extra three decades. Their sheer number, sizable financial resources, professional interests, and personal worries will redirect economic and political power; generate social changes; spawn scientific breakthroughs; and reshape the dominant artistic, cultural, entertainment, and style trends of a once youth-driven society.

Many journalists persist in expressing Cassandra-like alarm at the rise of an older America, even though prevailing images of a frail, dependent, elderly population are rapidly being supplanted by images of a nation of energetic, experienced, mature adults. The press needs to get with the story of the great population transformation. The age group that has consistently been the most loyal audience for news should now be seen as its best hope for the future.

Lawrence K. Grossman is a former president of NBC News and PBS.

Books

Unshining Moments



The Post's Bradlee

*What did newsmen
know of JFK's antics
— and when
did they know it?*



Time's Sidey



Author White



Chattanooga's Bartlett



Columnist Alsop



The Times's Reston

by Jules Witcover

Ever since the political demise of Gary Hart ten years ago, when a photograph on the front page of the *National Enquirer* showed Donna Rice sitting on his lap on a pier in Bimini, the tabloid tail of American journalism has increasingly been wagging the mainstream dog. Once the supermarket gossip sheets expose sex and other seamy scandals about national political figures, the major newspapers and newsmagazines feel obliged sooner or later to report them, if only to deplore the resort to sleaze.

The same thing happened in 1992, when *The Star* launched its reports of Bill Clinton's alleged womanizing. As the rumors and accusations mounted in the context of his campaign for the presidential nomination, they were quickly injected into the journalism mainstream. In the process the once-distinct line between gossip tabloids and the "responsible" press was blurred almost beyond recognition, as the character of political figures came to undergo as much scrutiny

and assessment as their policies and proposals, or even more.

Many major newspapers and newsmagazines still strive to avoid being lumped in with the supermarket and other flashy tabloid publications, declining to publish unfounded rumors, at least until they are dragged kicking and screaming into publication by the lead of the gossip sheets. Once an issue surfaces in the context of a campaign, such as reports this year of marital difficulties between Mayor Rudolph Giuliani of New York and his wife, local TV reporter Donna Hanover, the mainstream press finds it hard to leave it alone.

THE DARK SIDE OF CAMELOT

BY SEYMOUR M. HERSH
LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY
498 PP., \$26.95

In book-writing, there has not been the same sort of delineation of mainstream and gossip publishers. For the most part, highly regarded publishing houses have both high-brow and low-brow books on their lists each season, and there seldom is any widespread criticism, outside the publishing fraternity anyway, of those houses that turn out trash and

Jules Witcover, now of the Baltimore Sun, has covered Washington as reporter and columnist for forty-three years and is the author of thirteen books on U.S. presidential politics and history.

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garbage along with scholarly tomes. One explanation is that authors, in my experience at least, are treated by their publishers much more as independent storytellers, responsible for the veracity and tone of what they write, than are reporters for newspapers and magazines, whose product must run an editorial gauntlet before it is published.

While book publishers do have editors and fact-checkers, and manuscripts in many houses undergo line-by-line review, if an author chooses to make an allegation with weak attribution or none at all, that usually is considered his business, within the bounds of libel laws. The stronger the attribution the better, of course, but many accounts of celebrity hijinks make it into hard covers that would never get by the green-eyeshade types around the copydesk rim at *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and other newspapers.

Now comes the much-analyzed book on the late President John F. Kennedy, *The Dark Side of Camelot*, by investigative reporter Seymour M. Hersh, whose hard-hitting newspaper copy in earlier years survived the *Times*'s esteemed screening process for accuracy, fairness, and propriety. Perhaps because Hersh has been such an esteemed reporter himself for his Pulitzer-Prize-winning exposé of the My Lai massacre of Vietnamese villagers in 1970 and other investigative books including *The Price of Power: Kissinger in the Nixon White House*, he is being held to the sorts of high standards that are more customary for mainstream newspapering than for book publishing.

The book as a whole is a very ambitious exercise in debunking, and Hersh straightforwardly at the outset says it is not about Kennedy's "brilliant moments, and his brilliant policies," but about "a man whose personal weaknesses limited his ability to carry out his duties as president." In marshaling his case, Hersh assembles some impressive raw material, especially about Kennedy's dealings with Cuba, which unfortunately is overshadowed by the accounts of his sexual antics. But Hersh's attributions generally fall short of normal journalistic yardsticks. More important, many of his conclusions are weakly substantiated by his research and highly questionable.

Among the claims that leap out at the reader are Hersh's charge that Kennedy stole the 1960 presidential election with help from organized crime boss Sam Giancana in Illinois, and that he chose Lyndon B. Johnson as his running mate

in 1960 under a threat of blackmail regarding his womanizing. In neither case does Hersh present anything approaching a "smoking gun" in support of his allegation.

Particularly arguable are the the innuendoes in which he indulges and the conclusions to which he jumps on the basis of his raw material. He cites, for example, "a high-ranking military officer" as the source of his report that Kennedy as determined by the autopsy on his body suffered from venereal disease. Then he cites "incomplete handwritten notes" of a Washington urologist who treated Kennedy, the late Dr. William P. Herbst Jr., showing "that Kennedy was being repeatedly infected — and, *presumably*, infecting his partners." (Italics mine.)

At another point, Hersh strongly suggests that reckless romping by Kennedy with a female partner in a swimming pool, reported to him second-hand by *Time* columnist Hugh Sidey, indirectly contributed to the president's assassination.

"Kennedy may have paid the ultimate price . . . for his sexual excesses and compulsiveness," Hersh writes. "He severely tore a groin muscle while frolicking poolside with one of his sexual partners during a West Coast trip in the last week of September 1963. The pain was so intense that the White House medical staff prescribed a stiff canvas shoulder-to-groin brace that locked his body in a rigid upright position. It was far more constraining than his usual back brace, which he also continued to wear. The two braces were meant to keep him as comfortable as possible during the strenuous days of campaigning, including that day in Dallas.

"Those braces also made it impossible for the president to bend in reflex when he was struck in the neck by the bullet fired by Lee Harvey Oswald. Oswald's first successful shot was not necessarily fatal, but the president remained erect — and an excellent target for the second, fatal blow to the head."

Hersh observes ominously that the "groin brace" is "now in the possession of the National Archives in Washington" but "was not mentioned in the public autopsy report, nor was the injury that had led to his need for it."

Elsewhere in the book, Hersh implies that Kennedy's womanizing was responsible for the delay in advising him of the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba at the outset of the Cuban missile crisis. He cites how Kennedy's national security adviser McGeorge Bundy learned of the missile buildup one night but didn't tell the president until the next morning

because, as Bundy later wrote, "I decided that a quiet evening and a night of sleep were the best preparations you could have." Then Hersh adds: "As we have seen in this book, there were many times in the Kennedy White House, according to the Secret Service, when the president could not be disturbed, even for the most urgent of matters."

Concerning Kennedy's victory over Hubert Humphrey in the 1960 West Virginia Democratic primary, Hersh reports as fact that "the Kennedys spent at least \$2 million (nearly \$11 million in today's dollars), and possibly twice that amount — much of it in direct payoffs to state and local officials." He notes that *The Wall Street Journal* thereafter had a team of investigative reporters check out whether it was true and it "collected enough information to write a devastating exposé" shortly before the Democratic nominating convention.

"As with many investigative newspaper stories," Hersh then writes, "there was no smoking gun; none of the newspaper's sources reported seeing a representative of the Kennedy campaign give money to a West Virginian." He quotes Alan Otten, a *Journal* correspondent who covered the campaign, as telling him that "we knew they were meeting but we had nothing showing the actual handing over of money." Hersh reports that "the *Journal*'s top editors asked for affidavits from some of the sources who were to be quoted in the exposé" but "when the journalists could not obtain them, the editors ruled that the article could not be published." Hersh quotes one of the reporters on the team, Roscoe C. Born, saying "the story could have been written, but we'd have to imply, rather than nail down, some elements. I really wanted to do it, but I can see that the editors would be nervous about doing it practically on the eve of the convention."

Such caution, after all, is standard practice in responsible news operations. Hersh goes on to say that "the *Journal*'s reporting team was far closer to the truth than its editors could imagine." He reports that "in interviews for this book, many West Virginia county state officials revealed that the Kennedy family spent upward of \$2 million in bribes and other payoffs" before the primary. But the few West Virginia sources he names merely speculate on how much was spent.

Hersh also quotes the late Theodore H. White as writing in his 1978 memoir, *In Search of History*, "what he had not written in his book on the 1960 campaign —

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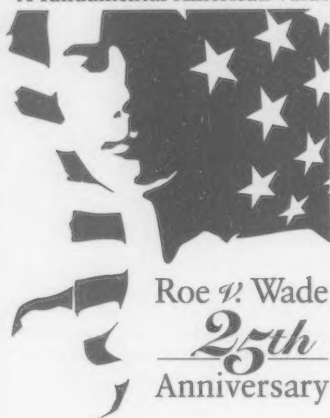
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that both Humphrey and Kennedy were buying votes in West Virginia," and that White acknowledged that "his strong affection for Kennedy had turned him, and many of his colleagues, from objective journalists to members of the loyal clique." Accordingly, Hersh notes, White claimed in his memoir "*without any apparent evidence* (italics mine) that 'Kennedy's vote-buyers were evenly matched with Humphrey's.'" Hersh's dismay at White making the observations without proof is amusing under the circumstances.

Hersh suggests at another point that Kennedy's relationship with Judith Campbell Exner may have cost taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars because it "apparently became known" to the General Dynamics Corporation, which "may have used that knowledge" to win a government contract to build a new generation of fighter planes known as the TFX. He reports a break-in of Exner's apartment in west Los Angeles by two men later identified by the FBI as the twin sons of I.B. Hale, who "was in charge of security for General Dynamics." At the time of the break-in, Hersh says, the corporation's chances of landing the contract "were precarious," and "the Hale family's criminal entry into Judith Campbell Exner's apartment, which has never been reported before, raises an obvious question: Was Jack Kennedy blackmailed by a desperate corporation?" Hersh leaves little doubt that he thinks the answer is in the affirmative, but offers mainly the rationale that General Dynamics "was in bad shape" at the time and on the merits was not competitive with its chief rival for the contract, the Boeing company.

In publicity material accompanying the book, Hersh says he "conducted more than a thousand interviews with people who knew and worked with Kennedy . . . and virtually all of those interviews were conducted 'on the record.' These are not 'unnamed sources.'" His prodigious work habits lend credence to the number of interviews, and his ability to get four Secret Service agents who protected Kennedy inside the White House to testify by name and on the record to his sexual indulgences is impressive, as is his collection of other attributed sources.

But many of his stories and allegations either are very loosely attributed or not at all, as he relies on such vague phrases as "published reports" . . . "by all accounts" . . . "published speculation" . . . "was no secret" . . . "did not wish to be identified"

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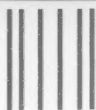
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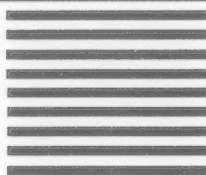
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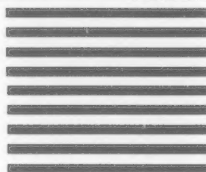
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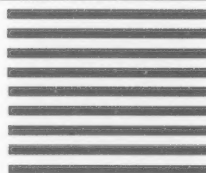
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... "reported in gossip columns" ... "was credited in one biography" ... "many historians have said" ... "it was common knowledge" ... "may have had irrefutable evidence" ... "although no paper trail exists" ... "probable advance knowledge of," and so on. In his acknowledgments, Hersh thanks his editor for his "unyielding standards"; maybe he meant thanks for going easy on him.

Also, Hersh's chapter notes at the back of the book are hardly what scholars would find adequate. There is no line-by-line, page-by-page identification of sources and attributions as is now customary in serious works. Instead, the author offers long summary paragraphs for each chapter merely listing titles of books he has drawn from and interviews conducted. As for his interviews, he repeatedly — even maddeningly — informs the reader that a source has spoken "in an interview for this book" or has produced information "not confirmed until this book" or "unpublished until this book." It is as if he wants to make absolutely sure that the reader doesn't miss what he says are the scoops he has unearthed.

At least one major attributed source, seemingly solid when first mentioned, seems less so by the time Hersh presents a caveat. On page three, he quotes old Kennedy friend Charles Spalding as reporting that "it was Jack who asked me if I'd go get the papers" from the Palm Beach courthouse that allegedly chronicled a first Kennedy marriage, later denied by Kennedy and the woman mentioned. Much later, returning to the same story, Hersh reports that Spalding "was seventy-nine years old when interviewed, and suffering from impairment of his short-term memory." But, Hersh points out, his account of a first marriage was "directly supported in subsequent interviews and indirectly confirmed by the late Richard Cardinal Cushing, the archbishop of Boston, who functioned as a parish priest to the Kennedy family."

Cushing, Hersh writes, in a late-night drinking session with a missionary priest in Bolivia in 1964, spilled the beans that, according to the priest, Father James. J. O'Rourke, "Kennedy was married before, but it got taken care of." Hersh observes elsewhere that it is "possible" that Kennedy and thrice-married Durie Malcom "were bigamists" because "no evidence of a divorce was found during research for this book."

It may be unfair, just because Hersh is

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a veteran journalist of exceedingly impressive record and credentials for this aggressive and dogged investigative work, to take note that in writing this book he has enjoyed the greater freedom in presenting and speculating about information than would be permitted if he still were a reportorial grunt in the trenches of a grubby newsroom. But any writer deserves to be judged on his work product, and that is what is happening in the critiques of this book.

One of the likely byproducts of Hersh's book is that it will reinforce a widespread impression that has long existed among the public — that the Washington press corps at the time knew all about the dark side of John Kennedy but covered up for him, so enthralled were reporters with his charisma and personality. Hersh feeds this impression by painting the press corps as “starstruck” and having dummied up about his sexual and other antics.

He quotes *Time*'s Sidey telling about one time he went skinny-dipping with Kennedy in the White House pool and Kennedy started talking about a favorite biography of Lord Melbourne, with Kennedy relating how the “young aristocracy of Britain . . . when they went to their country estates, it was broken-field running through the bedrooms. I mean they swapped wives, they slept with others. But the code of that period was nobody talked about it.” Thereafter, Sidey is quoted as saying, he and the president “had a shared secret.”

If Sidey knew about Kennedy's loose life-style, he never let his readers in on it at the time. In his column in *Time* about Hersh's book, Sidey writes that “while there was plenty of circumstantial evidence that he [Kennedy] was busy with extramarital adventures, he was also busy” with major affairs of state. And Sidey asks of the latest allegations: “Can the presidency be that depraved and it go unnoticed?”

As a younger reporter myself at the time who covered Kennedy only peripherally but had friends who were closer to him, I never heard stories about Kennedy's sexual antics. But the impression continues that they were well known and covered up. Yet the only reporters quoted by Hersh as claiming to have known anything about them are Sidey in his slim comment about his “shared secret” with Kennedy, and a brief remark from old Kennedy friend Charles Bartlett. A former Washington correspondent for *The Chattanooga*

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Times and later a syndicated columnist, Bartlett observed that another old friend, Bill Thompson, "was a pimp for Jack."

More serious in terms of the relationship between Kennedy and the press are Hersh's accounts of the president's friendships with Bartlett and another prominent and favored reporter, Ben Bradlee, then Washington bureau chief for *Newsweek* and later executive editor of *The Washington Post*. Hersh, drawing from interviews with Bartlett and others and memorandums Bartlett wrote to Kennedy at the White House, paints a picture of the columnist as diplomatic conduit as well as presidential friend while still plying the journalistic trade. The author quotes a Cuban defector from Castro, Ernest Betancourt, who says he tried to warn Kennedy through Bartlett "about the folly of the exile invasion" at the Bay of Pigs because "talking to him was like talking to Kennedy."

Hersh quotes Bartlett as saying he didn't pass on the warning that "everybody in Havana knows an invasion is coming" because "I didn't want to burden Jack," and instead told Allen Dulles, then director of the Central Intelligence Agency, who phoned back reporting, "He'd checked out my story," and dismissed it.

On another occasion, Hersh writes, Bartlett was the intermediary for a message from Aleksandr Zinchuk, the Soviet minister in Washington, prior to the Cuban missile crisis saying "Khrushchev wants the president to know that he understands he is busy with the elections coming up and he will not in any way interfere with the election."

Bartlett and co-author Stewart Alsop, Hersh reports, submitted a magazine article to Kennedy on the events of the Cuban missile crisis before publication and, according to Alsop later, "Kennedy read the piece for accuracy, and proposed a couple of minor changes."

Hersh writes that Bartlett also told him that in the spring of 1963 Paul Corbin, an abrasive political operative close to Robert Kennedy, alleged to Bartlett that John Kennedy aide and friend Kenneth O'Donnell and two others had been skimming campaign contributions from questionable sources for their private use. Bartlett wrote a note about it to Kennedy, quoted by Hersh, but Kennedy merely brushed it off.

"Bartlett never wrote a newspaper story about the scandal, which died with the murder of his good friend," Hersh writes. "Like Ben Bradlee and others

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who covered the White House, he found himself trapped in the gray area between friendship and professionalism. Bartlett remained troubled enough by what he knew and, perhaps, by what he did not do at the time, to make his letters to the president available for this book."

As for Bradlee, Hersh quotes a letter from him to Kennedy now in the John F. Kennedy Library in which he reported to Kennedy after covering a 1959 speech by Lyndon Johnson, a prospective rival for the 1960 Democratic nomination, that LBJ did not seem to him to be much of a threat because his image, accent, and Texas background did not give him "the requisite dignity . . . He's somebody's gabby cousin from Fort Worth . . . He's to be feared not as a potential winner but as a game-player who might try to maneuver you right out of the contest in Los Angeles."

More notably, Hersh tells how Bradlee wrote a story for *Newsweek* in 1962 debunking the story of Kennedy's first marriage with the help of FBI files provided by Kennedy insiders, and how he cleared it personally with the president before it was printed. (Bradlee never made a secret of his mixed relationship with Kennedy and in his own book, *Conversations with Kennedy*,

written after Kennedy's death, speaks freely about it as well as Bartlett's similar association. Bradlee wrote later in his memoir, *A Good Life: Newspapering and Other Adventures*: "At issue, then and later, was the question that plagued us both: What, in fact, was I? A friend or a journalist? I wanted to be both. And whereas I think Kennedy valued my friendship . . . he valued my journalism most when it carried his water".)

Hersh hammers at the Washington press corps for covering up for Kennedy the brutal treatment he received from Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev in their stormy 1961 meeting in Vienna. "A few favored members of the Washington press corps learned how thoroughly rattled President Kennedy had been by his confrontation with Khrushchev at Vienna," he writes, "but they did not share that information with their readers — as Kennedy knew they would not." He cites the case of James Reston, *The New York Times* Washington bureau chief at the time, being given an exclusive interview with Kennedy right after the meeting in which a bullying Khrushchev delivered an ultimatum on resolving the status of divided Germany. Reston wrote thereafter that the meeting was "apparently more cordial than had been expected" and that there were "no ultimatums and few bitter or menacing exchanges," although Kennedy had told him otherwise. (Reston in his own memoir, *Deadline*, reported the true climate of that meeting.)

None of these examples, however, support a notion that the Washington press corps in general knew all about Kennedy's foibles and went in the tank for him. At the same time, it is true that a much different code of conduct governed the press corps at that time, and had reporters known, they probably wouldn't have reported it. The accepted attitude was that a political figure's private life was his own business unless it affected the performance of his public duties, and therefore reporters did not go out of their way to learn about that private life. Only if a senator fell down drunk on the floor of the Senate might that fact be reported. If another senator had a mistress on the side and continued to do his job, the press figured — so what?

To this point, Hersh reports an interview with longtime Hollywood reporter James Bacon of The Associated Press in which he said of Marilyn Monroe: "She was very open about her affair

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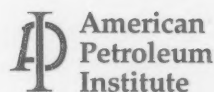
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with JFK. In fact, I think Marilyn was in love with JFK." Asked by Hersh "why he didn't file a story about the affair," Bacon told him that in those days "before Watergate, reporters just didn't go into that sort of thing. I'd have to have been under the bed in order to put it on the wire for the AP. There was no pact. It was just a matter of judgment on the part of the reporters."

That tolerant attitude began to change in a sense with two historical events that had nothing to do with the bedroom gymnastics of politicians — the war in Vietnam and the Watergate affair mentioned by Bacon. Each bred disillusionment with America's leaders — with Johnson for lying about his future escalation of the war and with Nixon and his whole crowd for their various crimes. At the same time, Washington reporters focused greater attention on the "character" of the nation's leaders, including personal conduct. An additional incentive for young reporters was the desire to emulate Watergate sleuths Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein and win fame and glory, giving new impetus to "gotcha" journalism.

In this environment, perhaps it was inevitable that the old line between mainstream newspapers and the gossip sheets would blur. And in the same environment, it should not be surprising that a solid investigative reporter like Seymour Hersh says in the publicity accompanying the release of his book: "It's essential that we know more about the character of the person leading the country. That doesn't mean we have to be prudes. JFK was entitled to a private life. But he also was operating with no dignity or respect for the office that he held. That's something we've got to know and something we can't allow to happen again. Does that mean you go and look at everything a presidential candidate has done in his private life? Obviously not, but I do know that I've moved the line over in my head . . ."

The prime journalistic question posed by Hersh's book is not, however, whether the dark corners of any presidency should be explored. The question is, in the exploration, whether standards applied in presenting the information learned, in terms of sourcing, attribution, and above all making assumptions from the raw material gathered, should be just as high for a hot book, with an obviously huge potential commercial market, as they are for an obscure newspaper or magazine story that has to pass by traditional editorial requirements to get into print. ♦

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Excerpts

YESTERDAY, TODAY, AND TOMORROW

FROM **BACK ON TRACK: HOW TO STRAIGHTEN OUT YOUR LIFE WHEN IT THROWS YOU A CURVE**, BY DEBORAH NORVILLE. SIMON & SCHUSTER. 256 PP. \$23.

Once I was gone from Today, the crisis hit. Suddenly I'd gone from "fastest rising star" to "damaged goods." It's a label you never want put on you in my business. It's a curse, a cloud that hovers over you — frightening away anyone who might have been interested in using your services as a broadcaster.

I was a villainess, a back-stabber, a conniver and schemer. All you had to do was read the clip file on me to know that. Who's going to hire someone when the first thing the newspaper writers are going to do is a computer search that spews out a stream of negative stories?

The more I focused on this, the deeper I sank. I had a beautiful baby and a wonderful husband. But I no longer had a career. And I realized that career had meant more to me than I'd ever imagined.

I think for anyone who's gone through a crisis there comes a turning point, an epiphany, which marks the beginning of the end. Mine came when Niki was about three months old.

It had been another bad day. I never did get dressed. Never did take a shower. Probably hadn't brushed my hair. That was nothing unusual. Most days I did absolutely nothing for myself.

Juliette, our wonderful housekeeper, had made a wonderful supper. She'd set the table using the good china and my mom's

silver. It was a delicious meal. It looked wonderful. And I couldn't eat a bite. I couldn't lift my fork. All I could do was cry. I sat there, my spine practically curling onto itself. My posture was as low as my image of myself.

Poor Karl. He tried to make me feel better. He reminded me of how mean so many people at NBC had been. He pointed out all those people who'd said they would call — and never did. He reminded me of that beautiful little baby upstairs sleeping. None of it helped. I just sat there and cried. My head hung so low, it was practically in my plate.

Karl took me by the hand and led me upstairs. He said, "Go to sleep. You're exhausted — just sleep until you wake up."

So I cried myself to sleep. And I slept. I slept for nearly twelve hours. It was the first real sleep I'd had in more than a year.

When I woke up . . . I got in the shower and . . . again I cried. But this time, it was different. I cried and hated "them" for ruining what should have been one of the most joyful times in my life. I cried for the loss of my career. I cried about everything that had happened. But through my tears, I made myself a promise: I would never let "them" have this kind of impact on my personal life again.

Norville, who replaced Jane Pauley on the Today show in 1990 and lost the job in 1991, is the anchor of Inside Edition.



Deborah Norville

STAR/CHUCK RUIN

THE WRITER MEETS THE WUNDERKIND

FROM **AMERICAN NOMAD: POP VISIONS, RESTLESS POLITICS, AND APOCALYPTIC MEMORIES AT THE END OF THE MILLENNIUM**, BY STEVE ERICKSON. HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY. 256 PP. \$25.

The phone call came from out of the blue. "What we want," the features editor at *Rolling Stone* said, "is a novelist who will write about the 1996 presidential campaign as though it were a novel." I admit that when the magazine flew me to New York to talk about it, I assumed the job was in the bag. "Oh, it's all set," the editor agreed, "but, uh . . . Jann can be . . . difficult . . . so we thought maybe he should just meet you," and two weeks later, ten minutes into my interview with the magazine's owner and publisher, I realized I didn't necessarily have the job at all.

Sitting on the other side of a huge empty desk, Jann Wenner kept narrowing his eyes at me in a way I think was supposed to suggest uncanny shrewdness but was really a desperate hope that if he squinted long and hard enough I might turn into R.W. Apple. He considered *The New York Times* the magazine's only serious competition on the campaign trail. "Who are your contacts at the White

House?" he demanded to know, and in my vaguest manner tried to explain I didn't have any contacts at the White House, that actually I didn't have any contacts anywhere. I wasn't a reporter and had never been one; I wanted to write not so much about the campaign itself, I explained, as about a year in the inner life of the country during the campaign.

He visibly shuddered. I think he had horrible visions of me dispatching bulletins between cow milkings from mid-west farmhouses in the middle of January, living with the Olsen family for a week and getting the pulse of the land, so to speak; and if there was one thing he most certainly was not interested in, Wenner made clear then and there, it was what ordinary people thought about this campaign. In the meantime a hundred more important matters distracted him. As our interview unfolded a certain routine developed, during which he would ask various questions about this and that . . . and just as I would begin to whimper some snivelously non-answer he would grab the telephone and start barking directives to various rock stars across the land about the upcoming Rock and Roll Hall of Fame concert, or start madly scribbling some-



Jann Wenner



Steve Erickson

thing completely unrelated to what we were talking about, just to let me know he was so beset by brainstorms he literally couldn't sit still. Others would assure me later that I should consider myself fortunate he actually looked in my general direction every once in a while rather than conduct the entire interview with his gaze cast grandly over Sixth Avenue . . . In his own puckish fashion he was charming. But it was only another ten minutes into the interview when

I realized with an almost audible gasp that he didn't have a clue who he was; he didn't seem to know, I later told an editor at another magazine, if he wanted to be on the cutting edge of American journalism or invited to dinner at the White House. "Oh, he knows," the editor answered, "he knows exactly which one he wants. He just likes to pretend to himself that he still wants the other one."

Erickson is the author of, among other books, *Days Between Stations and Amnesiascope*.

WENNER: GAMMA LIAISON/STEVE AZZARA; ERICKSON: JAY SILVERMAN

THE COLOR OF MONEY

FROM **NIITY GRITTY: A WHITE EDITOR IN BLACK JOURNALISM**, BY BEN BURNS. UNIVERSITY PRESS OF MISSISSIPPI. 230 PP. \$27.50.

In the inflamed racial climate of the 1960s, for a white to edit a black newspaper had become obviously impossible. I decided to leave the *Defender*, my decision a recognition that I was no superhero able to transform its editorial maladies, staff attitudes, and the ingrained shortsightedness of its top management. By then I had also come to recognize realistically that trapped in the innate contradictions between commercial success and racial militancy, black journalism had faced a perpetual dilemma from its founding in 1827. During all the intervening decades, the accepted thinking of black publishers was that the very racial belligerency that garnered readers for them inevitably lost advertising revenue, while diminishing militancy in their pages lost reader support and loyalty even as it increased advertising. African American newspapers chose to favor militancy over advertising. With *Ebony* magazine John



Ben Burns

H. Johnson challenged that conventional approach; he rejected racial militancy to win millions of dollars in advertising. Yet although he upset the general precept of the black press, he nevertheless was able

to win a vast readership, unprincipled as his journalistic path might have seemed in some eyes.

The major role I played in *Ebony's* early success could have been a source of much pride for me, but I never quite adjusted to *Ebony's* deliberate disregard for the ongoing plight of so much of black America. I resigned myself to accepting the principles of black capitalism and the limitations they inevitably placed on *Ebony*, but I never became fully reconciled to its editorial policies. Eventually I came to understand that black journalism — whether the *Defender* and *Ebony* under black ownership or *Sepia* under white control — was as fully dedicated to profits as any other business venture.

Burns was the first editor of Ebony magazine and the first white editor of the Chicago Daily Defender.

EVERLASTING PIECE

FROM RUSSELL BAKER'S INTRODUCTION TO **THE LAST WORD: THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK OF OBITUARIES AND FAREWELLS**, EDITED BY MARVIN SIEGEL. WILLIAM MORROW AND COMPANY. 426 PP. \$25.

Obituaries these days often provide the only pleasure to be had from the daily newspaper and should be savored slowly, saved for leisurely reading over the last cup of breakfast coffee. To plunge into them first thing, before having endured the rest of the day's news, is like eating the dessert before tackling a fried-liver dinner.

What blessed relief they provide after the front page — people butchering neighbors' wives and children to serve God, right injustice, and display cultural superiority; science announcing that everything you love to do, eat, or drink will kill you. What calm satisfactions they afford after the hospital fumes of the sports pages with their pulled hamstrings, torn knee cartilage, dislocated shoulders, ripped tendons, broken collarbones, crushed vertebrae, shattered elbows, torn rotator cuffs. There the reader must also suffer muscular hulks whining that at \$3 million per year they are shamefully underpaid.

Then, at last, the obituaries. Oases of calm in a world gone mad. Stimulants to sweet memories of better times, to philosophical reflection, to discovery of life's astonishing richness, variety, comedy, sadness, of the diverse infinitude of human imaginations it takes to make this world. What a lovely part of the paper to linger in.

Baker is a columnist for The New York Times. Siegel is an assistant to the paper's managing editor.

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I certify that the statements made by me are above are correct and complete.
Dennis F. Giza, Associate Publisher

Essay

by Mike Hoyt

Message to Mort

To: Mort Zuckerman:

Re: America's most important tabloid

Dear Mort, How are you? Nervous, I gather. Me too. Don't you just hate that Rupert Murdoch and his *New York Post*? He starts a Sunday edition and undercuts the price of your *Daily News*. You drop to a dollar; he drops to a quarter. A quarter. Then when his circulation rises and yours slips, he trumpets this on page three of his paper — POST DELIVERS SUNDAY PUNCH TO REELING NEWS — without so much as a mention of the price war. As they say in Australia, that's chutzpah. Your new editorial czar as of January, Harry Evans, is claiming he has a certain respect for Rupert, his new tabloid rival, even though Harry worked for Rupe as editor of *The Times* of London in 1981-82, was bled dry and then fired. When *The Guardian* of Britain asked Evans, shortly after you hired him, about his feelings for Murdoch, Evans remarked that the most interesting character in *Paradise Lost* is Lucifer.

About this Evans thing: I hope it's not a sign of panic. First you hire Pete Hamill, to the applause of the journalistic world. He cuts back on gossip and celebrity and tries mightily to boost the paper's attraction for women and for immigrants, who make up so much of New York's population. He talks excitedly about cooking up "God's paper." But he gets just eight months before you lose faith.

Next, in November, you install Debby Krenck, a well-liked insider at the *News* and the first woman ever to run it. She is clearly trying for tasty stories that people talk about and savor.

The wedding-that-wasn't is an example. On November 23 *The New York Times* reports that Nicole Contos and Tasos Michael "were married yesterday," in the stately Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Cathedral in Manhattan. Not so, however. As your *Daily News* reports the following day, the groom, a London attorney, gets iced feet, leaving the bride, a kindergarten teacher, alone at the altar in her cream Victorian wedding dress from Saks. She cries. Then she marches into the Essex House and urges 250 guests to go ahead and party. The band breaks into "I Will Survive."

Great story. But all of pages one, two, and three? (Page four was devoted to the high school and college years of Jerry Seinfeld.) Next day we find that the groom has taken the honeymoon by himself — HIS COLD HEART THAWS IN TAHITI — and this gets pages one, four, and five (with a nice shot of the four-carat engagement ring). By Saturday the *News* has the groom's picture, so again it's page one: MEET THE JERK. Mort, how will you cover World War III?

A sense of proportion is a problem all over the media. In a louder, faster world it seems increasingly difficult to come up with a menu that is both delicious and nutritious. And it's a special problem for you, Mort. I have this fear that, in your battle with the *Post*, you'll be tempted to ape it.

I'm no stick-in-the-mud. I want to know something about

Mike Hoyt is CJR's senior editor. His e-mail address is mh151@columbia.edu.

Marv's wig. But I don't want pages one, two, and three sacrificed to Marv's interview with Barbara, as the *News* did on November 7 (Q: *Is wearing women's underwear part of your turn-on?* A: *No, not at all.*). Or take your October 17 edition. Please. The excerpt from Donald Trump's latest piece of literature, with the page-one headline: I WISH I HAD DATED DI. Jeez, Mort. After a front page like that, everything inside your paper gets diminished. All the ten-dollar headlines. All the hard reporting, of which the *News* has plenty. All the excellent columns, an arena where the *News* shines so very brightly.

The Trump thing was the polar opposite of Krenck's best stuff, like the exposé of the transit authority's hidden surplus, the successful crusade to cut subway and bus fares. At its best, the *Daily News* is a solid meal in a hungry city. We need a paper that is comfortable with plumbers and secretaries and cops. Great as it is, the *Times* often sees the city as if through the window of a fine restaurant. The *News* — not the *Post* — is the one I see most in my focus group, the subway. But if you fail to provide enough that is serious for these underground strivers you may not, in the end, be taken seriously.

Now comes Harry Evans, and Mort, I honestly don't know whether to be more or less nervous. He'll be czar over your other publications, *U.S. News* and *The Atlantic Monthly*, too, but he seems most excited about a return to newspapers. His most recent job was publisher at Random House, and he's a Brit who hangs around with gliterati. Maybe you're casting against type? But then, on the other hand, he's spent thirty-nine years in newsrooms, fourteen of them as editor of London's *Sunday Times*, where he had a taste for big-league investigative stuff.

Evans explained his new role at the *News* this way to *The Guardian*: "What was it Bagehot said about the role of the monarch? To advise, to warn, and to encourage. That's how I shall try to act." Does Krenck like advice from kings?

Well, I hope so. I hope this chemistry works. As you know too well, Mort, Rupe's *Post* gets a lot of attention from press types because it puts so much energy into media coverage and gossip. He's no dummy. The *Post* has built its business coverage, too, and added intriguing conservative commentary on its op-ed page. It looks at home next to a lunch box though it's increasingly a second read for the Wall Street set. But it gives tabloids a bad name, Mort. So heavy on celebs and royals and generally light on anything else, and such a weapon for Rupe to bash his business rivals and the politicians he doesn't like. So I'm for the *News*, Mort, and for you and Debby and Harry, whichever of you is chief cook and bottle washer.

I read where you were a guest of the White House, at the state dinner for Chinese president Jiang Zemin. How was that chilled lobster with corn-leek relish? The pepper-crusted Oregon beef? I wish you many more such meals. Just don't try to feed the rest of us bread and circuses.

Sincerely,
Mike ♦

The Lower case

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The Detroit News and Free Press 11/1/97

**9 hammers in home of
hooker attack suspect**

San Francisco Examiner 10/24/97

**Woman dies after
81 years of marriage**

The Sacramento Bee (Calif.) 7/29/97

Officials lean away from mountain lion

The Philadelphia Inquirer 10/22/97

**USA to
seek new
location**

The Sheridan Press (Wyo.) 10/22/97

Crum said there is still discussion on whether to hire a full-time human executive director or continue Haynes in both positions.

Evanston Review (Ill.) 9/13/97

**Seek help, confide in spouse
before embarking on affair**

El Paso Times (Tex.) 8/22/97

Giant women's health study short of volunteers

Aruba Today (Caribbean) 7/13/97

Tudor makes a difference in boy's summer

The Ephrata Review (Pa.) 10/27/97

**737 from Boston
hit by lightning**

The Boston Globe 10/28/97

► Jury recommends life without prison for Andy Deas, 20

Mobile Register (Ala.) 9/20/97

Singer John Denver dies in experimental plane crash

Northern Star (Ill.) 10/14/97

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